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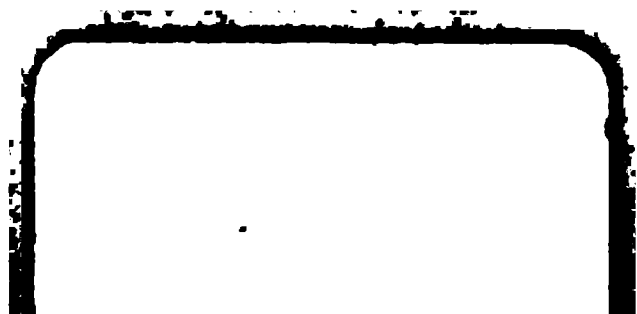
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*H. H. Sibley*

BREV MAJ GEN HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY



THE  
ANCESTRY, LIFE, AND TIMES  
OF  
HON. HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY, LL.D.

EX-MEMBER OF U. S. CONGRESS; MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN  
GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY; FIRST DELEGATE FROM  
THE TERRITORY, AND FIRST GOVERNOR OF  
THE STATE, OF MINNESOTA.

BREVET MAJOR GENERAL, U. S. V.; COMMANDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION  
OF MINNESOTA; PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE  
STATE UNIVERSITY, OF THE STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY, OF THE STATE NORMAL  
SCHOOL BOARD,  
ETC.

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*Non omnis moriar.*

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BY  
NATHANIEL WEST, D.D.

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## PREFACE.

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I PURPOSE to write, in outline, the *Ancestry, Life, and Times* of Henry Hastings Sibley, the historic starting point of whose pedigree is first descried in the gray foretime, near the Plantagenets, and not remote from Norman conquest, when Saxons fought against their proud invaders. Briefly, I desire to indicate historic names in the line descending thence, conspicuous through the scenes of English history, down to the times of the Pilgrim Fathers and days of Cromwell, the times of Carver, Standish, and of Endicott's and Winthrop's fleets, when, as part of a vast immigration, the Sibleys crossed the seas, while "Westward the course of empire took its way;" a line thence lengthening and widening through the mazes of American colonial and revolutionary strife; crossing the epoch of the Great Ordinance of 1787, continuing to the War of 1812, when the subject of this sketch was a babe a year old, and a prisoner of war in British hands; thence, hitherward, spreading through the settlement of the Northwest Territory, and particularly of Minnesota, before it had a state or territorial name, and advancing to the period of the present writing. It is a long and sometimes tortuous road to travel, and much of our march must imitate the steps of Homer's gods in space.

The task, not less pleasing than severe, recites the story of one whose fortunes were not only unsunderable from the birth and history of Minnesota, but are so interwoven with the fortunes of the whole Northwest, that the dimensions of a single volume are insufficient to compass the wealth of material by which the treatment of the theme is embarrassed. The fabled Atlas, with the globe on his shoulders, illustrates, in measure, the relation to the State of Minnesota of one who, with universal consent, repeated public expression, and on anniversary occasions, has been by his contemporaries accorded the rank of "*First Citizen of Minnesota*," and to whose health the magnates of the state, met in semi-centenary banquet, responded, rising to their feet in honor of their guest, and applauding the toast "*Long Live the King!*" This meed of meritorious praise—not a vain flattery—precludes the possibility of exaggeration on the part of a historian, and binds him to respect the public judgment. Sprung from a line of ancestors renowned in the annals of their country, in both hemispheres, stretching backward through

six centuries and twenty generations, and many of whose noblest qualities are illustrated in the life of Henry Hastings Sibley, Minnesota possesses, as her own, a man whose memory she will covet to keep as long as the "North Star State" shines in the constellation of states that form the great American Union. It is not that many brave men, and noble, have not preceded Agamemnon, nor that the subject of this sketch lacked contemporaries of distinguished name, men of literary, civil, military, and social mark, deserving well of the state, as also of the nation, but it is that Agamemnon himself was great.

In the study of my task I have not only applied myself to the most authoritative published historical and genealogical sources of information, but also, with interest, to unpublished manuscripts and notes, correspondence, diaries, and various papers of unusual value relating to my theme, so that, notwithstanding the many sketches, histories, and volumes, already extant, the reader will here be treated to some draughts undrawn before, and find new flowers not hitherto set on the board.

*Juvat integros accedere fontes, atque haurire; juvatque novos decerpere flores.*

I write, therefore, from sources individual and official, personal and public, state and national, American and European, concerning one who, in his youth, was of adventurous disposition, marvelous in his many-sided life, of great capabilities, commanding intellect, high moral tone, intense susceptibility to the beautiful, religiously disposed, and of determined will and purpose; a man whose history far transcends the rôle of Æneas whom Virgil sang, and who, were a Homer now living, would be made the subject of his muse; a man of virtues such as Tacitus has told of Agricola; of physical stature Ajax-like in his manhood, full of symmetry, and courtly in his manners; a man of fine accomplishment, integrity unwavering, ideals ennobling, endurances wellnigh incredible, and of whom, one of the most gifted governors of the state has testified that "he bore in his breast, to this distant region, the seeds of an advancing and all-comprehending civilization," planting the same in the Territory of Minnesota, making its "solitary places glad," and its "wilderness to blossom as the rose."<sup>1</sup> A frontiersman and vancouver by hereditary right, and with lineal prestige superior to a hundred robber-kings, romantic, chivalrous, and self-reliant, instinct with exploit and enterprise, he could have been no other than his history has unfolded him. The prearranged conditions of his birth foredestined him to be a "*Prince of Pioneers*." The stature of his thought, the persistence of his will, the kindness of his heart, his self-conscious elevation,

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<sup>1</sup> Words of Governor Davis.

modest as obliging, and condescending as dignified, were among the noblest products of Nature, in his constitution. The arching canopy of heaven, the heaving waters of the lakes, Nature's vast solitudes, and the great prairies of the West, were types, to him, of the Infinite and Ever-present One, and their silent magic left upon him their undying impress. Narrow, bigoted, unjust, unbenevolent, irreligious, ignoble, degraded, untruthful, unsympathetic, he could never be.

His primacy is conceded. In his youth he was superlative among the many Nimrods around him, "a mighty hunter before the Lord," a "splendid shot," not surpassed by the Indian; a sportsman by birth, loading the shoulders of his fleet barb with the game that skimmed the sky, and chasing, with delight, not only through the air, but through lines of living prairie fire, the buffalo and elk, the panther and the deer, and camping at night, unmolested, where the red man roamed. He was the first judicial officer, and sole lawgiver over a domain extensive as the Empire of France, and where, to-day,—a half century gone by,—stand the four great states of Iowa, Minnesota, and the two Dakotas, thronged with millions of an industrious population, cultured and rich, shielded by laws their wisdom has framed, and crowned with institutions their liberality has reared. Their sky-pointing spires rise everywhere, and glitter heavenward, in the glancing sunlight, where once the smoke of the wigwam curled, and the savage war-whoop was the only Sabbath bell. He was the first in a tenderer jurisdiction, the captured conqueror of one whose personal attractions were, to him, a net of the sweetest entanglement, and a wound whose pain was his pleasure. He was first as foreman of the first grand jury ever impaneled west of the Mississippi, in what is now known as Minnesota, interpreting to a French jury the charge of a Saxon judge. He was the first delegate from Wisconsin Territory, after Wisconsin was admitted as a state with diminished boundaries, gaining by dint of sheer superiority his seat in Congress, and, after powerful opposition, securing the passage of a bill organizing the Territory of Minnesota. He was the first delegate from the Territory of Minnesota thus organized, and re-elected by the overwhelming voice of the people. He was first as president of the Democratic branch of the convention met in troublous times to form the state constitution, its guiding genius and its counselor. He was first as the first governor of the State of Minnesota he had done so much to found; the stalwart champion of her honor and credit during the long struggle in which both were sought by reckless politicians to be destroyed. He was first as a state military officer, appointed by the governor, with the powers of a general commanding the state troops, in the fateful hour of

the Sioux massacre of 1862, when the blood of nearly a thousand lives cried for vengeance, and the homes of Minnesota's first settlers lay smouldering in their fires. He was the first from the state as a general in the army, appointed by the president, to command the whole military district of Minnesota during the Civil War. He was first in the second joint military expedition against the Indians in 1862-3, victorious in three successive battles, driving them across the Missouri river. He was first upon the board of Indian commissioners to negotiate treaties with the hostile Sioux and other bands still threatening the upper banks of that waterway. He was the first military officer of the state brevetted as major general in the army of the United States Volunteers for gallant and meritorious service in the field. And as if Minnesotians could heap no honors too profusely on him, he has been for years eminent among the regents of the State University, adorning the chair of the president of the board, president also of the State Normal School Board, and of the State Historical Society; also of the Chamber of Commerce, of the Cemetery Association, of the Gas Company, of St. Paul; commander of the Loyal Legion, and standing at the head of various institutions and charities besides. If recurring primacies and responsible positions and honors multiplied; if the consentient suffrages of popular esteem, public confidence and admiration, affection and respect; if a life devoted to the interests of the state and the welfare of his fellow men are a passport to the gratitude of any people, then, with others worthy of reward, so much of the character and deeds of Henry Hastings Sibley will secure for him, while life still lingers, a constant and enduring regard, and, when life is ended, a monument to perpetuate the name and the figure of one of whom both state and nation have just cause to be proud.

To secure the utmost accuracy, the following narrative, so far as relates to events under his immediate observation, has been submitted to the criticism of Mr. Sibley himself. The statements made can be relied upon as historically just. Authentic documents vouch for the rest. For whatever commendation of the deeds, person, or character of the subject of this sketch may be found in the course of these pages, the writer is alone responsible, heedless of many a protest forbidding the same, and purposed to express what justice and truth required at his hands.

NATHANIEL WEST.



## TABLE OF GENERAL CONTENTS.

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*The specialized summary of contents is placed over the head of each chapter, for the greater convenience of the reader. The index, at the close of the volume, gives a particular paged reference to each of the subjects, persons, events, and items of fact. The present table of general contents simply indicates, in the most general way, the main scope and character of the chapters.*

---

### CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

Paternal lines, English and American, of the Sibley family; ancestral bearings; religious, civil, social, political, and military, status in history; their immigration to the New World; biographical sketches of some of the more prominent in American annals; incidents and events connected with their career; a general historic view ranging backward, from 1629, the time of the landing of "Winthrop's Fleet," to near the Norman Conquest, and forward, from 1629 to 1811, the birth-year of Henry Hastings Sibley.....

1-45

### CHAPTER II.

Period of the boyhood, early manhood, Indian and pre-territorial, life of Henry Hastings Sibley; or from 1811 to 1828, the year he left his paternal home for the Sault Ste. Marie; from 1828 to 1834, the year his feet first touched Mendota; from 1834 to 1843, the year of his marriage; from 1843 to 1848, the year of his entrance into the Congress of the United States as delegate from the residuary portion of the Territory of Wisconsin.....

46-93

### CHAPTER III.

Period of the congressional career of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley; first as a delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin, 1848-9; preceded by a statement of the influence of the United States upon European institutions at that time; also a statement of the great outstanding questions affecting the fortunes of the whole country when Mr. Sibley began his political life; and an account of his successful struggle to secure his seat in Congress, and the recognition of the rights of his constituents. Thirtieth Congress, opening of second session, December 3, 1848.....

94-103-115

## CHAPTER IV.

PAGE

Period of the congressional career of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, as delegate from Wisconsin Territory, continued; including the history of the acquisition of the Northwest Territory, and of the Louisiana purchase; the organization of various special territories, and particularly of the Territory of Minnesota, sprung from a "double mother," and under eightfold successive jurisdictions; the intense political agitation of the country; the violence of sectional strife; the great yet successful struggle to secure the passage of the bill establishing Minnesota Territory; and the important results flowing therefrom. Thirtieth Congress, second session, from December 3, 1848, to March 3, 1849 .....116-135

## CHAPTER V.

Period of the congressional career of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, continued, but now as delegate from the Territory of Minnesota; the increasing political agitation of the entire country threatening the disruption of the Union, and establishment of dual and hostile governments; exciting scenes in Congress; the arduous labor and unremitting devotion of Mr. Sibley to the interests of his constituents; his fearless and eloquent arraignment of the Indian policy of the United States; defense of the red man; assertion of the claims of the pioneer; and vindication of the rights of the Territory of Minnesota. Thirty-first Congress, first session, from December 3, 1849, to September 30, 1850; second session, from December 2, 1850, to March 3, 1851.....136-158-173

## CHAPTER VI.

Period of the congressional career of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, continued; polar antagonism between North and South; political parties breaking up; assertion of moral principles in state and national politics; difficult and embarrassing position of Mr. Sibley; his unswerving unpartisan attention to the affairs and interests of Minnesota; his conflicts and struggles in the house; his victories; his great service in securing territorial appropriations and legislation for the benefit of Minnesota; his final appeals in behalf of railroad communications, connecting the Gulf of Mexico with the British line, North, and Lake Superior with the Mississippi river. Thirty-second Congress, first session, from December 1, 1851, to August 31, 1852; second session, from December 6, 1852, to March 3, 1853.....174-200-209

## CHAPTER VII.

Post-congressional career of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, or period of his public service in the legislature of the Territory of Minnesota; his exposure and defeat of public fraud and corruption; his

memorial to Congress unveiling the crimes of the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad Company, and the fraud of the territorial legislature upon the substance and rights of the people; his position in the formation of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota; his administration as the first governor of the state; his resistance to the "Five Million Loan," and his manly struggle to maintain the credit and honor of the state; the phenomenal condition of the world in 1860-62. Mr. Sibley in the celebrated Charleston Convention, South Carolina, 1860.....210-240-246

CHAPTER VIII.

Post-gubernatorial life of ex-Governor Sibley. Period of his first military campaign against the insurgent Sioux Indians; the great massacre of 1862; commissioned August 19, 1862, by Governor Ramsey, as colonel commanding the expedition against the Sioux, with full powers of a general officer; pursuit of the Indians; battles of Birch Coolie and Wood Lake; defeat of Little Crow and release of the captives; trial and condemnation of the criminal Sioux by military commission; simultaneous execution of thirty-eight; the results of the expedition; promoted to rank of brigadier general, September 29, 1862. Observations by the writer, upon our culture, humanity, and civilization. Action of the legislature of Minnesota, and the business men of St. Paul, in reference to General Sibley. First military campaign, and results; from August 19, 1862, to September 23, 1862, to March 23, 1863. 247-277-301

CHAPTER IX.

Period of the second military campaign of General Sibley against the Sioux Indians; organizes the expedition and advances from Camp Pope, June 16, 1863; pursuit of the retreating foe; forced marches from Fort Atchison, July 20, 1863; the battles of Big Mound, Dead Buffalo Lake, and Stony Lake; 10,000 Indians driven across the Missouri river; the important results of the campaign; order issued for the homeward march; deep personal bereavement of General Sibley. Observations by the writer upon the "Indian Problem;" fate of Little Crow; second military campaign, and results; from June 16, 1863, to July 31, 1863, to September 13, 1863.. 302-317-333

CHAPTER X.

Post-military career of General Sibley; promoted, by brevet, to the rank of brevet major general, United States Volunteers; delayed commission received April 30, 1866; recalled to national service after being honorably mustered out; occupied in negotiating treaties with the Indians; multiplied offices, and responsibilities pressed upon him; reopening of the question of the Minnesota

state railroad bonds; General Sibley's election to the state legislature, and his triumphant vindication of his administration as first governor of the state; his elevation to many dignities; his last years crowned with military, civic, literary, and academic, honors, 1864-1870-1889. Observations of the writer upon state morality; public expression in regard to General Sibley.....	334-345-355-364-38
---	--------------------

**CHAPTER XI.**

Resumé of the career of Henry Hastings Sibley; special description of his various characteristics; as a man; a statesman; a public speaker; a debater; his moral attributes; religious element; his literary merit; love of humor; love of nature; humanity, and benevolence. Home, family, and connections, of General Sibley. Observations upon his wonderful career. The indebtedness of Minnesota to him as the foundation of her greatness, and the central figure around which all others revolve.....	382-417-431
Personal acknowledgment.....	432

**APPENDIX.**

Part I.....	435-457
Part II.....	458-481
Part III.....	482-549
Note on New Ulm.....	550-554

THE  
ANCESTRY, LIFE, AND TIMES  
OF  
HON. HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY, LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRAL LINE OF HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY.—THE FIRST AMERICAN SIBLEYS.—JOHN SIBLEY OF SALEM.—JOHN SIBLEY OF CHARLESTOWN.—DERIVATION OF THE NAME; SAXON, NOT NORMAN.—COATS OF ARMS.—SIBLEYS OF HERTFORD AND KENT.—“JOHN SIBILE” OF GRAY’S INN.—“JOHN SIBLEY” OF ST. ALBANS.—THE SIBLEY HIGH SHERIFFS OF HERTFORDSHIRE.—LETTERS OF HYDE CLARKE, ESQ., LONDON.—SOCIAL POSITION.—INTERMARRIAGES.—DODINGTON OF LINCOLN’S INN.—DR. WILLIAM GOUGE OF WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.—BACKWARD GLANCE FROM CHARLES I. TO WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.—DOMESDAY BOOK.—FORWARD GLANCE FROM CHARLES I. TO PRESENT TIME.—“STAR CHAMBER” AND “CONVENTICLE.”—SIBLEYS AND THE WINTHROP FLEET.—GERM OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.—ENDICOTT’S ADVANCE.—LANDING AT SALEM AND CHARLESTOWN.—THE “CAPUT ROTUNDUM.”—CONNECTION BETWEEN JOHN OF CHARLESTOWN AND JOHN OF SALEM.—SHIP LISTS LOST.—LINKS.—THE SUTTON SIBLEYS.—SUTTON TOWNSHIP, AND THE LAND GRANT.—GODFEARING PEOPLE.—PURGATORY AND ICICLES.—SIBLEYS AND WHIPPLES.—CHURCH AND PEW.—THE SIBLEY PEWS.—JOSIAH SIBLEY AND “YE WIDOWS.”—MUSIC.—SCENES IN CHURCH.—DISTINGUISHED CONNECTIONS.—PURITANIC NAMES.—BEER BARREL WHIPPED FOR WORKING ON SUNDAY.—CAT PUNISHED FOR CATCHING A MOUSE DURING PRAYER.—THE TALL BRIDE.—MRS. SIBLEY AND THE BEAR.—SALEM WITCHCRAFT.—INDIAN JOHN AND THE CAKE.—BERKLEY’S ODE, “WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY.”—BRILLIANT COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY RECORD OF THE SIBLEYS.—CHIEF JUSTICE SOLOMON SIBLEY OF DETROIT, FATHER OF HENRY HASTINGS.—NAMES OF HIS CHILDREN.—CATHERINE WHIPPLE.—COMMODORE WHIPPLE.—FIRST SHOT AT THE BRITISH FLAG ON THE SEAS.—STEPHEN HOPKINS, SIGNER OF THE “DECLARATION.”—COLONEL EBENEZER SPROAT.—THE “OHIO COMPANY.”—ORDINANCE OF 1787.—IMPORTANT FACT NOT GENERALLY KNOWN.—LANDING OF THE WHIPPLES AND SPROATS AT THE MOUTH OF THE MUSKINGHAM RIVER,

OHIO.--"BUCKEYE."--SARAH WHIPPLE SPROAT, MOTHER OF HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY, BOTH PRISONERS IN BRITISH HANDS AT DETROIT. —GIRLHOOD, EDUCATION, LIFE, AND DEATH OF MRS. SOLOMON SIBLEY.—HER CHARACTER.—BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTE TO HER MEMORY BY MRS. ELLETT.

HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY was born in the city of Detroit, February 20, 1811. He was the fourth child and second son of an honorable sire, Chief Justice *Solomon Sibley* of Detroit, whose wife, Sarah Whipple Sproat, was the only daughter of Colonel Ebenezer Sproat, an accomplished officer in the Continental Army, and the granddaughter of Commodore Abraham Whipple of the Continental Navy, an illustrious commander, the first who fired upon the British flag on the high seas, during the Revolutionary War, and the first to float the star-spangled colors from his masthead in the Thames at London. Judge Solomon Sibley was born in Sutton, Massachusetts, October 7, 1769, and was the third son of *Reuben Sibley*, born in the same place, February 20, 1743, who was the second son of *Jonathan Sibley*, born in the same place, September 11, 1718, who was the fourth son of *Joseph Sibley II.*, born in the same place, November 9, 1684, who was the first son of *Joseph Sibley I.*, born in the same place, 1655, who was the third son of *John Sibley I.* of Salem, Massachusetts, the brother of *Richard Sibley I.* of Salem. Tradition vibrates somewhat as to the precise time when these two brothers first appeared in America. One account states that, "In the year 1637, John Hampden, Oliver Cromwell, and John Pym, and others, weary of the tyranny of Charles Rex and Archbishop Laud, determined to emigrate, in a body, from England to America, with the purpose of establishing themselves as the nucleus of a free community; but the king prohibited their embarkation. Among the many young men who were thus balked in their purpose were two Sibley brothers, natives of Middlesex county, near London, John and Richard Sibley, who contrived to escape, however, and safely landed in that part of America then known as 'North Virginia,' but now as 'New England,' locating themselves in Salem, Essex county, Massachusetts. Both these brothers were unmarried. The date of their arrival is somewhat conjectural, one authority fixing it at 1614, another at 1620, still another at 1624; Derrick Sibley of Cincinnati saying his record is at 1632. The precise fact



is not yet decided.”<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the later and larger number of authorities, so far as accessible, place the appearance of the Sibley brothers, John and Richard, about, or at, the time of the “Winthrop Fleet,” 1629, only nine years after the landing of the Pilgrims from the Mayflower, 1620, at Plymouth Rock, and the settlement of “New Plymouth,” the first permanent civil foundation ever laid in New England, Charles I. being King of England. Calculated from whichever date, the generations of the Sibley family in America, from John I. of Salem, to Henry Hastings Sibley of Detroit, are seven generations, and, including his children and grandchildren, are nine generations, covering a period of two centuries and a half.<sup>2</sup>

Ogilsby, in his early classic “History of America,” published 1671, narrates that, between 1620 and 1650, a period of thirty years, or one generation, the English had planted forty-five chief towns in “New England,” the first one, after the location of Fort St. George, being “*New Plymouth*,” the second being “*Salem*,” called *Mahumbeak* by the Indians, and built, in the year 1628, by “*merchant adventurers*,” the third being Charlestown, or Mashawmut; the fourth “Dorchester in the form of a serpent;” the fifth “Boston, the metropolis of all the rest, in the form of a heart;” the next “Roxbury, which resembleth a wedge, situate between Boston and Dorchester.”<sup>3</sup>

From the early records, it appears that a “John Sibley” resided at *Charlestown*, Massachusetts, in 1634, while another “John Sibley” resided at *Salem*, Massachusetts, 1634 also. From these two Sibleys, with “Richard Sibley,” a brother of John of Salem, all of Puritan stock, have descended the widespread connection of Sibleys, not only in New England, but throughout the whole United States. From the Salem Sibley, John I. of Salem, came Henry Hastings Sibley of St. Paul, through the line of Joseph I., son of John I. of Salem, Joseph II., son of Joseph I., Jonathan, son of Joseph II., Reuben, son of Jonathan, and Solomon, son of Reuben, as already stated.

1 Genealogical Record of the Sibley Family, by Hon. John Hopkins Sibley, St. Louis Missouri, 1851. Type-written from MS., p. 1.

2 History of Sutton, 1704-1876, pp. 717-726, and History of Union, by J. L. Sibley, 495-500. Memorial of the Morses, Boston, 1850. Leland's Genealogical Record, Boston, 1850. History of Grafton, by T. C. Pierce, Worcester, 1879. History of Spencer, by J. Draper, Worcester, 1875. Indexes to American Pedigrees, by D. S. Durrle, Albany, 1886. Wells of Southhold, by Hayes, Buffalo, 1878, pp. 91, 109, 136-7, 140-149, 150, 181. Consult under the title “Sibley.”

3 Ogilsby's Hist. America, folio, A. D. 1671, p. 154.

Of the *first two John Sibleys*, the one at Charlestown, the other at Salem, we shall speak more hereafter. It is enough for our present purpose to state, that in the lines of both John and Richard Sibley of Salem are found a multitude of men and women of high distinction, adorning the annals of the nation, in all the various walks of private and of public life.

The name "*Sibley*" is a name of long standing in English history, as it is of various orthography, betraying differences as marked in its development as are the differences between our English now and that of the times of Spenser and Chaucer. In the successive genealogies, heraldries, and public records of English history, it assumes a multitude of variations; as, "*Sibell*," "*Sibille*," "*Sibli*," "*Sible*," "*Siblie*," "*Sibile*," "*Sibili*," "*Sibilie*," "*Sibely*," "*Sibly*," "*Sibley*," "*Seble*," "*Sybly*," "*Sybele*," "*Sybeli*," "*Sybyle*," "*Sybely*," with an "*alias Sybery*," the liquid "*r*" being interchangeable with the liquid "*l*," and moreover drawn into close relation with "*Sileby*," by means of the marked agreement between the armorial bearings of the families of "*Sileby*" and "*Sybly*." The etymology of the name is somewhat conjectural. It is certainly not of Greek derivation cognate with "*Sibyl*" from the Doric genitive of "*Zeus*" (*Sios*), Jupiter, and "*Boule*," the counsel or oracle of Jove, which the ancient Sibyl professed to be, even though we find the names "*Sibyl Sibley*," and "*Sibylla*" in the published pedigrees. It can hardly be of Norman derivation, meaning a "*field of wheat*," "*Si*," and "*ble*," since this violates the syllabic division of the word. It is doubtless true that some of the family were found in England at the time of William the Conqueror, but the genealogies do not favor a French origin. The word is clearly Anglo-Saxon, from "*Sib*," which means "*alliance*," "*relationship*," "*peace*," and "*leagh*," contracted to "*lea*," contracted to "*ly*," which means something *laid down*, and, therefore, either a "*law*," or a "*land*," i. e. *territory*. The line in Gray's Elegy, "*The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea*," gives us one of the senses plainly. The other sense, cognate to that of the German "*legen*," to *lay*, and hence, a rule laid down to go by, a *law*, is familiar to all.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the word "*Sibley*" is, therefore, either (1) *Law of Peace*, or *Peace Law*, or (2) *Land of Peace*, or *Peace Land*, i. e. *Alliance*

<sup>1</sup> Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary, pp. 155, 200.

*Land, Union Land*, the idea being that of rest, or cessation, from strife. The Rev. John Langdon Sibley, many years librarian in the University of Harvard, regards the name as a synonym for "*Kinsmen's Land*," rejecting the primary sense of the "lea," or "ly," viz., a "law," and also the primary sense of "Sib," viz., "peace,"—these two senses giving us "*Peace Law*,"—as "conjectural."<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, it is an established rule in philology, and respected by all the later lexicographers, that the primary sense must run somehow, and be seen somewhere, in all the subsequent variations. We cannot reject it, but must hold to both senses in their fulness of historic usage. The combination "Sibley" is the same as in the words "Dudley," "Horsley," "Morley," "Huxley," "Shipley," "Beverly," and seems to express the fact of peace and brotherhood enjoyed after times of discord and war. The variations in the form of the word do not affect its root meaning. These are common to all words in the progress of their development. In the *New England Genealogical Dictionary*<sup>2</sup> the forms "Sibly," "Sebley," "Sybley," are given as among others of the same name, and found everywhere in the history of the family, precisely as we find the different forms of the name "Selby," "Selebi," "Selebe," "Silibie," and "Silby;"—a circumstance which, in connection with the close resemblance of the armorial bearings of the two families, has led to the supposition that the name "Selby" is only a variation of the name "Sibly." In the town records of Sutton, Massachusetts, from 1718 to 1876, we find "John Sible," "Samuel Sible," "Joseph Sibly," "Martha Sibley," all of the same family, a variation frequent both in Old and New England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>3</sup>

The armorial bearings of the different branches of this ancient and widespread family are diversified, representing both peace and war, a necessity in the national history of any family. In the "*Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*," London, 1837, the arms of the Poynes and Sibells are given as copied from an old worn stone below the east door of the chapel of St. Dunstan's in the west of London. The inscription reads "Armes of the Poynes and Sibells; Barry, or and gu., in chief a mullett, impaling; Gyronny of eight

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Sibley's *History of Union*, p. 495 note.

<sup>2</sup> *Geneal. Dictionary of New England*, Vol. IV, 93.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Sutton, 1704-1876*, pp. 31, 37, 41, 47, etc.

az., and or; four martlets in lozenge counterchanged."<sup>1</sup> In "Fairbairn's Crests of Great Britain and Ireland," we have still another heraldry, (1) "Sybells," five halberds in pale, az., corded together, of the first and gu.,"<sup>2</sup> and (2) "Sybele, Engl; out of a ducal coronet, or, a swan's head between wings."<sup>2</sup> Another coat of arms we find described as "per pale, az., and gu., a griffin between three crescents, ar.," and this is given as "the arms of the Sibley family of St. Albans, certified to their descendants in this county (Hertford) by the present officers of the Herald's College." This is the crest George E. Sibley, Esq., of New York City, has published as the crest of the Sibleys from whom came the first Sibleys of Charlestown and Salem, Massachusetts,<sup>3</sup> and is also given by Burke, in his General Armory,—“per pale az. and gu., a griffin passant between three crescents, ar.”—as the arms of the same family,<sup>4</sup>—the griffin, or half lion and half vulture symbolizing swiftness, ferocity, and readiness for attack; a heraldry assumed, doubtless, at some period of the family history, by one of its great branches, to commemorate some important achievement, or mark some new distinction. This in no way conflicts with the more peaceful heraldry of the ducal coronet and swan's head with wings, as given in Fairbairn's Crests, a coat of arms believed by the Sibleys of St. Albans to be the true crest of the family, the one question being whether it is the crest of the Sibleys from whom came "John Sibley, Mayor of St. Albans," or from whom came Henry and Thomas Sibley, *High Sheriffs* of Hertfordshire.

There is still another coat of arms belonging to the Sibley generation, and of marked historic interest. It is that of John Sibley of Gray's Inn, London. In Dugdale's celebrated "*Origines Juridicales*," a rare historical memorial of the ancient English law courts and forms of trial, we find the record "*Iohannes Sibile, 1559*," his coat of arms described as fixed "*in Borealibus dictæ Aulae Hospicii Grayensis Fenestris*,"<sup>5</sup> that is, "on the north window of the hall called Gray's Inn," one of the most renowned seats of English legal learning.

<sup>1</sup> Coll. Top. et Geneal. Land, 1837, Vol. IV, pp. 106, 108.

<sup>2</sup> Fairbairn's Crests, Lond. and Edin., Vol. I, 462, and Vol. II, Plate 62, Crest 8; also, Vol. I, 462, and Vol. II, Plate 83, Crest 1.

<sup>3</sup> Burke's General Armory; Sibley. See, also, J. Langdon Sibley's History of Union, p. 495.

<sup>4</sup> Wells of Southhold, pp. 159, 160.

<sup>5</sup> Dugdale's *Origines Juridicales*, p. 307.

The coat of arms of this distinguished man is "a shield, quarterly; in first and fourth a tiger, gules, viewing himself, backward, in a mirror, az.; in second and third a chevron, gules, between three cows' heads, caboshed, fable."<sup>1</sup> Burke, in his General Armory, gives "the tiger looking backward in a mirror, en reguard," as the heraldry of the Sibells of Kent county, thus, "Sibell (county Kent), ar., a tiger looking down in a glass, reguard, az."<sup>2</sup> This accounts for the first and fourth quarters of the shield, and identifies the "John Sibile" of Gray's Inn with the "Sibells of Kent," famous in defense of the nation. The explanation of the second and third quarters is given by Hasted in his "History and Survey of the County of Kent." Writing of Axton Hundred, Kent, he describes the estate of the "Sibills of Little Mote" as one which, in 22 Henry, Vol. VIII; was greatly increased, and subsequently passed over, through Anne, daughter of "Lancelot Sibill," to John Hope, in the time of Charles I. At the time of the survey of Domesday, the estate became the possession of Odo, bishop of Baieux, and half-brother of William the Conqueror, and was unquestionably reclaimed in some late period of English history; an estate which, held, at first, by its Saxon owners, either from Harold or Edward the Confessor, 1042, was, doubtless, confiscated in 1066, and given, like others, by the Conqueror, to his relatives, nobles, and friends.<sup>3</sup> The explanation of the three cows' heads is that the manors of Little Mote, possessed by the Sibells, were increased by the marriage of one of the Sibells to the *heir of Cowdale*," and the heraldic emblem, commemorating this accession, is the "*three cows' heads*" in the third and fourth quarters of the combined escutcheon.<sup>4</sup> Among these Kentish "Sibells," in the time of Henry VII. we find "Thomas Sibell," and "Nicolas Sibell" in the time of Edward VI., both men of distinction.

The coat of arms, therefore, of "*John Sibile*, 1559," of Gray's Inn, connects him with the Kentish Sibells, and commemorates the increase of their estates by the marriage referred to. The names with which the name of this eminent and "utter barrister" of Gray's Inn is associated are second

<sup>1</sup> Hasted's Hist. Topog. Survey, Kent County, Vol. II, p. 538.

<sup>2</sup> Burke's General Armory, p. 926.

<sup>3</sup> Hasted's Hist. and Topograph. Survey of County of Kent, 1797, 12 volumes, Vol. II, p. 538.

to none in English history, being those of Spelman, Sackville, Lovelace, Walsingham, Lord Bacon, Yelverton, and others, all fellows of the same renowned hospice.<sup>1</sup> As to the St. Albans branch of the family, authoritative history has preserved the name of "John Sibley, *Mayor* of the Borough of St. Albans, 1557, 1569, 1578," and, among the contemporary mayors of St. Albans, "William West, 1535, William West, 1568, 1576, and Richard West, 1813."<sup>2</sup> The contemporaneous association of these names in the same county and city, in Old England, and the contemporaneous appearance of the same names, in Charlestown and Salem, in New England, with others similarly associated, and in both places, go far to establish the fact of a common geographical origin and relation of the Sibleys of New England to the Sibleys of Hertfordshire, and of Kent also. They were numerous, and occupied prominent positions on both sides of the water. Among the high sheriffs of Hertfordshire we find "Henry Sibley, Esq., of Yardley," and "Thomas Sibley, Esq., of Yardley," during the reign of George I. and "Edward Sibley of the Monastery of St. Albans, pensioned in the reign of Queen Mary after the dissolution of the religious houses in the county of Hertford."<sup>3</sup>

That the Sibleys of Hertfordshire and Kent were of the same family is indisputable to anyone who understands English history. What the relation of "John Sibile, 1559," of Gray's Inn — the Kentish Sibley — was to "John Sibley, mayor of St. Albans, 1557," is a question of interest. Whatever the solution as to the special branches of the family and their various heraldries, there is no doubt that from these descended the "John Sibley" of Charlestown, and the "John Sibley" of Salem, Massachusetts, the last the blood progenitor of Henry Hastings Sibley of St. Paul, Minnesota. In one of the most painstaking investigations of a portion of this vast connection, found in the work entitled "Wells of Southhold," the result of the study is thus stated: "John Sibley I. of Charlestown, Massachusetts, was a lineal descendant of the Sibley family of St. Albans, Herts, England, where John Sibley was burgess and mayor in the time of Edward VI."<sup>4</sup> — a monarch

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale's Orig. Jurid., pp. 279, 280.

<sup>2</sup> Hasted, ut supra, Vol. II, p. 338.

<sup>3</sup> Hist. and Antiq. of County of Hertford, by Robt. Clutterbeck, Esq., F.R.S., London, 1815, Vol. I, p. 51; Appendix 20, Vol. II, p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> Wells of Southhold, Hayes, pp. 159, 160.



who ruled on the English throne from 1547 to 1553, the patron of Cranmer, whose catechism was called the "Catechism of Edward VI."<sup>1</sup> Only one and a half generations lie between the John Sibleys of Hertford and Kent, on the one hand, and the John Sibleys of Charlestown and Salem, on the other, and less than one generation between their immediate descendants and the Sibley immigration to America. English history seems to give us no other contemporary "John Sibley" outside the John of Gray's Inn, and the John of St. Albans, the one 1559, the other 1557, and if these were the same person, seen under different relations, then we have but one "John" known to history whose name the Johns of Charlestown and Salem could have borne. The traditions of the Sibley family from its earliest intimation near the time of the Conqueror; then, later still, siding with the Duke of York against the king in the battle of St. Albans, A. D. 1455, where the first blow was struck between the houses of York and Lancaster; their hereditary love of freedom and hatred of religious oppression; the fact that, not only among the Cavaliers but also among the Puritans in still later times, the sons of men of distinction, some competent as merchants, some less affluent than others, sought a home in Western wilds; the conspicuous prominence of the Sibleys in New England affairs so soon after their arrival; the identity of the proper names in the family on both sides of the sea, and of associated families also; all seems clearly to determine the whole question of family filiation. The two following letters, however, recently communicated, to General Henry Hastings Sibley, by his relative, a gentleman of high distinction in the city of London, must be conclusive in the judgment of reasonable men:

32 ST. GEORGE'S SQUARE, S. W.

LONDON, January 1, 1888.

*General Henry Hastings Sibley,*

MY DEAR SIR: I have always regretted that the ties between Old and New England were allowed to slacken and almost die off. Now, however, there is a new spirit, and as the main body of the English speaking races are now on your continent, so I hope the intercourse will be better kept up. I am, as you are aware, descended from *Elizabeth Sibley*, one of the main stock in our county of Hertford. In the course of events it has fallen to my share, in association with my Sibley connections here, to assist in eluci-

<sup>1</sup> Burnet's History of His Times, Vol. III, p. 4.

dating the genealogy, as I informed you, through the help of the authorities of St. Albans, and I have been enabled to settle for your American tribe the filiation from that branch.

It is, therefore, as a simple tribute to a national and family feeling that, on the occurrence of a new year, I salute, in your person, one of those who have conferred high distinction on the Sibley family. It may be that it will not be my lot to do so for many more years.

We have our General Sibley here, also, my associate in his boyhood, who joined his family in India, and has now retired from the service. His brother George holds the Indian decoration.

Faithfully Yours,  
HYDE CLARKE.

The second letter, written a few months later, is equally important and interesting:

32 ST. GEORGE'S SQUARE, S. W.  
LONDON, April 23, 1888.

*General Henry Hastings Sibley,*

MY DEAR SIR: I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter of February 6th. In the north window of the great hall of Gray's Inn, in London, one of our ancient law colleges, stood the arms of

JOHN SIBILE,  
1559.

These arms are recorded by the famous Dugdale in his "*Origines Juridicales*." They are not the same as those afterward granted to the Sibleys, the sheriffs. It appears, therefore, that the Sibleys had their arms, at least, in the sixteenth century. This Sibley was most probably your forefather, *John Sibley*, the mayor of St. Albans, although there may have been some other John. The Gray's Inn Sibley was a man of consideration. An event in the history of our family is the part it played in New England. It has not, however, been without a share in our Indian empire. Besides the Sibleys, mostly in the military service, the Rivett-Carnacs (Burnetts), a great civil family, descended, by marriage, from a Sibley. The great civilian, Sir Richard Temple, baronet, and grand commander of the Star of India, who was lieutenant governor of Bengal and ruled 100,000,000 of the human race, was also descended from the Rivett-Carnacs. We have sent you some colonists to the Pacific. My cousin Arthur Clarke is, for the time, in Santa Barbara, California, beaten out of New Zealand by the climate, and my cousin Gertrude, married to Captain H. A. Mellon of Vancouver, British Columbia, is taking shelter there from the cold of Winnipeg, together with her brother Frederick Clarke and family. So we spread out.

Yours Faithfully,  
HYDE CLARKE.

Few pedigrees of three centuries and a half are better established. That the Sibleys of Hertford were of the same family as the other Sibleys of Somerset, Kent, Northampton, Middlesex, Essex, Sussex, Leicester, and Huntingdon is

attested by various genealogies. Everywhere, wherever their intermarriages are found, some are among those of the highest culture in the realm. In "Marshall's Genealogist," the entry is made that *Richard* Sibley of Cogenhoe, Northampton, married, 1711, Elizabeth, daughter of William Dodington of London, son of George Dodington of Horsington, Somerset, son of the celebrated Christopher Dodington, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, who married the daughter of the Rev. William Gouge, D.D.,—one of the most eminent divines of the Westminster Assembly. This pedigree is attested by E. S. Dendy, the Chester herald, and G. W. Callen, the portcullis pursuivant of arms.<sup>1</sup> Richard Sibley was thus great grandson, by marriage, of the eminent counselor of Lincoln's Inn, who was the son-in-law of Dr. Gouge. Mrs. Sibley was thus the great-granddaughter of the same eminent counselor. These relationships are samples of many that crown both sides of the house with distinction, and show the high social position of the Sibleys in great part, during the memorable times of the Stuarts, Cromwell, and James; in fact, from the time of Edward to Queen Anne, a period of over a century and a half, 1547–1714.

That the Sibley family is of great antiquity there is no question. From Charles I. to William the Conqueror is a long road, but the Sibley line runs the whole way, retrograde from the landing of the "Winthrop Fleet," 1629–30, to the time of the Plantagenet Henry II., if not to the battle of Hastings, 1066. Eminent as were the Kentish and St. Albans Sibleys, in the time of the Tudors, when "John Sibley" was mayor and burgess of the city, sixty years before the Mayflower sailed, we find them no less so during the times of the "Wars of the Roses," and memorable battle of St. Albans, where Somerset died on the field, and of Northampton, where the royal forces were routed and Henry VI. himself was captured, 1460. In "Willis' Cathedrals of England" we find the following: "John Sibley, 1459, succeeded Roger Mersham as prebendary of Lincoln."<sup>2</sup> In the age of Henry V. we find the name spelled "Sibyle." In the reign of Richard II., son of the Black Prince, the time of Wat Tyler and the peasants' rebellion against taxation, the name is written in the record commission, "Sibille." Far back as the times of Wallace

<sup>1</sup> Marshall's Genealogist, Lond., 1877, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Willis' Cathedrals, Vol. II, p. 172.

## ANCESTRY, LIFE, AND TIMES OF

Bruce, and Edward I., we meet it ever recurring in various forms. In the "Rotuli Hundredorum," 1207-1272, it is in the lists of the owners of lands in the counties of , Oxford, and Suffolk, written as "Sibeli," "Sibili," "li," "Sybli," and so, in other rolls or registers preserved in the Tower of London.<sup>1</sup> In the "Rotuli Litterarum arum," it appears as "Sebley," and "Sybly," just as "Selebi" and "Selebie" for "Selby," and "Wynp" for "Winthrop."<sup>2</sup> Beyond the "Magna Charta," to the time of Richard the Lion-Heart, the Crusades, the Conquest of Ireland, we find it, 1201-1189, in the "Rotuli Chartarum," again spelled with two "ll's" as before; "Hono Sibille de Rames cum Gloucestre."<sup>3</sup> As in later times, so here, in the heart of the Middle Age, we encounter the name in the feminine form, "Sibilla," from which doubtless the combination, "Sibilla Sibley," and "Sibyl Sibley," of our modern date, have sprung. Whether the combination was made in deference to her who muttered from the tripod in the Middle Age,—"*teste David cum Sibylla*,"—we have no means of knowing. Romance gives to Charlemagne's daughter the name "Sibilla." So, also, we find the name "Fitz-Sibilla," the Saxonized form of "Filius Sibillæ," a name still living in the parishes of Essex.<sup>4</sup> In the "Rotuli Claustrorum," 1201, we meet with "Sibilla, filia Roberti filii Ricardi de Sibbeford;"—Sibilla, daughter of Robert Fitz-Ricard of Sibford, and in the same Rotuli we find "Sibilla Agnetis de Lasceio," and again, "Sibilla uxor Jordani."<sup>5</sup> In the Rotuli of Patents, we find "Sibilla mater Wilhelmi de Albrok," standing in connection with such phrases as "Sibilla litteris attestata," "Sumerst custodia portium," "Sumerst foresta," "Somerst in terra," and "Somers."<sup>6</sup> And, in the rolls of patents in the time of King John I., 1186, the conventional "*Sciatis quod*," we find a grant made "Ricardus de Sibton,"—the Sib-town being simply the

<sup>1</sup> L. Sibley's Hist. of Union, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup> Rotuli Litt. Claus. asserv. in Turri Londensi, Vol. I, p. 773.

<sup>3</sup> Rotuli Chartarum, asserv. in Turri Londonensi, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Essex Inst. Collections, passim.

<sup>5</sup> Rotuli Litt. Claus. asserv. etc., Vol. II, p. 41, p. 108, A.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, Part 1, p. 88; Rotuli Litt. Patentium, asserv. in Turri Londonensi, Vol. I, p. 123.

Sib-lea, inhabited;—another to “Sibilla uxor Arsic,” and another to “Sibilla, Priorissa et Abbatisa Electa de Berking.”<sup>1</sup>

One step more concludes our backward journey. We have reached the twelfth century, A. D. 1186, covering a period of nearly four centuries and a half, dated backward from 1629, the time of the “Winthrop Fleet,” or seven hundred years from the present day. It is but a step to William the Conqueror, A. D. 1066, the eleventh century. The “Domesday Book” (*Liber Domus Dei*) is the oldest national record in the archives of England, the record of the “Great Survey” of England at the time of the Conquest, made in order to ascertain who were rightful holders of lands and estates under Kings Edward and Harold, whether as allodial or under tenants. That no record of Sibley estates or lands is here found is no proof that none existed; for, first of all, the survey was incomplete, and next, it is well established that William, bent on punishing those who dared resist his invasion, confiscated their estates, giving the same to his Norman knights, while their Saxon owners were left to shift for themselves. Nevertheless we find ancient traces of the “Albani,” “Salebi,” “Siboldas,” and “Sybton,” which, taken in connection with the history of the Sibley family in England, justifies the reasonable conclusion that the ancestral line of Henry Hastings Sibley of St. Paul, Minnesota, extends backward, from the present moment, to the eleventh century, the time of the Norman Conquest, A. D. 1066, a period of over eight hundred years.

If, now, we start from the same epoch that formed the base for our backward search, namely, A. D. 1629, and come forward to the present time, our labor will be no less richly rewarded. As a preliminary word, it is proper to say that, while the Sibley family seem in English history to side with the men who fought for civil and religious liberty and against the oppression of tyrants and kings, yet some in the line seem to have been of opposite views. In Rymer's *Fædera* we find the following: “For John Sibley. The king, May 26, 1632, granted to John Sibley *et al.* the office of clerk and clerks in the *star chamber*, during life;”<sup>2</sup> and in the famous Dugdale's

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Pars 1, pp. 123, 144.

<sup>2</sup> Rymer's *Fædera*, Vol. XIX, p. 348.

"Warwickshire Knightlow Hundred," the record, "Thomas Sibley, clerk."<sup>1</sup> This, however, is offset by history of another hue. In Besse's "Sufferings of the Quakers," we find that "Thomas Sibley, 1684, and William Sibley, 1685, were sent to gaol for being at an unlawful meeting, a conventicle, in Somersetshire."<sup>2</sup> In the same volume, "William Sibley" is chronicled as a prisoner in 1685, in Leicester, for like offense, this place being the town where the Rev. Mr. Higginson was settled as pastor before he sailed in the "Winthrop Fleet" to Massachusetts, 1629; the time about which the first Sibleys came to the New World. This piece of history illustrates the period. The "*Camera Stellata*" and the "*Conventicle*" were but obverse sides of the same historic epoch, adorned with the face of Charles on the one side and of Cromwell on the other, and it was but natural that then, as now, in every great national question, families were represented on both sides. The burden of record, however, goes to show that the Sibleys were of Puritanic stock, men of the same mind with those who accompanied John Robinson to Holland, or Winthrop to Salem. The same counties from which the sires came are the counties in which, to-day, their children are enrolled as "Owners of Land in England," the counties of Kent, Middlesex, Northampton, Essex, Sussex, Hertford, Somerset, Leicester, Lincoln, Warwick, and Devon.<sup>3</sup>

The epoch of history when the "Winthrop Fleet" bore "John Sibley" to Massachusetts, was, next to that of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, and of which it was only an echo, the grandest in modern times. It was a time when the spirit of Liberty rekindled her torch, and a Hampden, Sydney, and Pym were abroad in the majesty of popular rights; a time when the commons in Parliament dared to affirm the freedom of speech as their ancient right, and the watch-words "Petition of Right," and "Freedom to Worship God," sounded from Puritan tongues. Both denied by king, lords, star chamber, and high commission, the eyes of thousands were turned to where the Pilgrims, but nine years before, had made their home. A remarkable circumstance, scarce known to the American people, is that the Winthrop expedition was conditioned on a fact which bore in its breast the germ of the

<sup>1</sup> Rotull Hundr. Marton, Vol. I, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Besse's Sufferings of the Quakers, Vol. 1, pp. 638-644.

<sup>3</sup> Owners of Land in England, Vols. I, II, III, passim, Lond., 1875.

whole American Revolution and the absolute independence of the colonies in 1776. That fact was the surrender of the charter, and transfer of the whole government of the colony and company of Massachusetts Bay to the company itself; *a present, absolute, and total release of the colonists from a foreign jurisdiction, forever.* Certain men of learning and wealth, with wide influence over others, and who, for several years, had discussed the matter, met, August 26, 1629, under the shadow of the walls of the University of Cambridge, in Old England, and "having weighed the greatness of the work in regard of its consequences, God's glory, and the Church's good," offered to the general court of the Massachusetts company, to "cross the high seas under God's protection," and make a new and firm plant in the New World, taking with them their families, friends, and all things needed, "*provided the whole government, together with the patent for said plantation (the Plymouth company's plant) be first, by order of court, legally transferred and established to remain with us and others who shall also inhabit said plantation.*"<sup>1</sup> Not as mere adventurers they came, but to stay forever; yet only upon condition that the "*whole government*" go with them to Salem, and the company be free forever from subordination to a foreign jurisdiction. The immensity of that proposition was felt by the general court, but the splendor of the offer extorted assent, and "Winthrop's Fleet" was the result. Tradition relates that in one of the vessels of that fleet of fourteen sail, came "*John Sibley,*" the ancestor of Henry Hastings Sibley of St. Paul, Minnesota. It was a fleet, departing from different ports, and landing at different dates, "furnished with men, women, and children, all necessaries, men of all handicrafts, and others of good condition, wealth, and quality, with two hundred and sixty kine, and other cattle, to make a firm plantation in New England."<sup>2</sup> Godfearing men, among whom were "merchants and capitalists of London, and others also who mingled hopes of profit with a desire to do good and advance the cause of religion;"<sup>3</sup> men like Governor Winthrop, Sir Henry Rosewell, Sir John Young, Dudley, Humphrey, Sibley, Saltonthall, West, Coddington, Southcoat, Johnson, Lothrop, Thorndike, with some fifteen or

1 See the evidence produced by Hon. Robt. C. Winthrop, President Massachusetts Historical Society, in Wisner's "Memorial History of Boston," Vol. I, p. 101.

2 Prince's Annals, Vol. II, p. 199.

3 Wisner's Mem. Hist. of Boston, Vol. I, pp. 88-107.



twenty ministers, such as Higginson, Davenport, Skelton, Nye, Ward, Maverick, Bright, and Smith, a company, in all, of nearly two thousand souls.

The difference between old and new style reckoning has caused some confusion in the early records, embarrassing, on some accounts. Of this, Prince and others have complained. The fact is that the "Winthrop Fleet" is so called from its chief personage, John Winthrop, first governor of the colony under its surrendered patent. Its preparation began in the year 1628-1629, and was in progress during the consideration of the proposal to bring the government of the colony, this time, along with the emigrants themselves. As early even as the autumn of 1628, six vessels, bearing two hundred English emigrants, entered the harbor of Salem in Massachusetts bay, their governor, John Endicott, selecting for them the place of their settlement. This was the advance guard of the "Winthrop Fleet." The Plymouth company, March, 1628, having granted to Endicott and twenty-five others the territory from three miles south of the bay to three miles north of the extremest point of the Merrimac, Endicott sailed from England and landed at Naumkeag (Salem), where Conant welcomed his arrival. In June, 1629, Rev. Francis Higginson, with another large company, arrived in Salem, and July 4, 1629, founded Charlestown, the charter already alluded to being assigned to the colonists, August, 1629. Thus, a purely mercantile company became an independent provincial government, Winthrop being elected as the first governor of the colony under its new *regime*, one detachment of vessels bearing 406, another, in June, 1630, bearing 800, and another, in July, 700 more emigrants to the New World. In short, Endicott's and Winthrop's fleets were parts of one vast emigration, in the years 1628-1630, impelled by the "new idea of an independent existence on the transatlantic side," the vessels departing at different dates, and from different ports, and arriving at Salem at different times. The great movement, of which the "Winthrop Fleet" was the main body, included all who sailed immediately before and immediately after the main body. In the absence of complete ship-lists of emigrants, port records being either lost or not accessible, room exists for some latitude of conjecture as to the precise date of the arrival of certain persons. All the more is this so, inasmuch as a number of the ships of both Endicott's and Winthrop's



fleets continued to sail under their charters, repeating their trips, to and fro, for several years after 1628–1630. The date of the arrival of the *Arabella*, or admiral ship, of twenty-eight guns, bearing Winthrop, is, however, well ascertained, being June 24, 1630, the vessel landing at Naumkeag, or Nahumkeik (Salem), named from the Hebrew "*Nahum-keik*," "*Haven of Comfort*," and from Psalm 76:2, "In Salem also is his tabernacle."<sup>1</sup> We read that "some of the company moved to *Mishawum*, to which Governor Endicott gave the name of *Charlestown*, on Massachusetts bay, and which received the company of Winthrop,"<sup>2</sup> the Pilgrims being now saluted by the newcomers as an "independent colony," the fleet having borne both charter and sovereignty into their hands.

In "*Felt's Annals of Salem*" the entry is made, like that of so many others, "Sibley John, mr. c. fl. 1629;"—that is, "John Sibley, married, came over in the fleet, 1629;—an entry made when enumerating the "first settlers in Salem, many of whom came from Northampton, the north of Scotland, and south of England."<sup>3</sup> In Drake's "*History of the Antiquities of Boston*," the name "John Sibley" is enumerated in the list of names known to have been in Salem before and in the year 1629."<sup>4</sup> Of this John Sibley of Salem, John Langdon Sibley, librarian of Harvard University, says, that "he took the freeman's oath September 3, 1634; was the sixteenth on the list of members of the First church, Salem; was selectman in 1636 at Salem; had a grant of land of fifty acres at Manchester, 1636; was selectman there also in 1636; an extensive land owner; died in Manchester, 1661; had nine children, four boys and five girls; and his widow, Rachel, brought the inventory into court, and 'ye court doe order that ye estate be left in ye widoe's hands to bring up ye children till ye court take further order.'"<sup>5</sup> Hanson, in his "*History of Danvers*," says of this same Sibley, that "he had land near Salem village, now probably Danvers."<sup>6</sup> Savage, president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, says of this Sibley also that

1 Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, p. 67; Prince's *Annals of Salem*, Vol. I, p. 188; Hubbard's *History of New England*, p. 102; Wisner's *Mem. Hist. of Boston*, Vol. I, p. 60.

2 Prince's *Annals*, Vol. II, pp. 188, 240.

3 Felt's *Annals of Salem*, Vol. I, pp. 67, 172.

4 Drake's *Hist. Antiq.*, Boston, p. 57.

5 J. Langdon Sibley's *Hist. of Union*, p. 497.

6 Hanson's *Hist. Danvers*, p. 31.

"he took the freeman's oath September 3, 1634; was selectman 1636; had land at Manchester and Jeffrey's creek, 1637; died at Manchester 1661; his widow, Rachel."<sup>1</sup> And Barber, in his "Massachusetts Historical Collections," says that the church to which he was admitted as a member, "was the first Protestant church formed in the New World."<sup>2</sup> The early records, however, make mention of a John Sibley of Charlestown, impossible to be identified with the "John Sibley of Salem," inasmuch as, though bearing the same name, yet they took the oath, and united with the church, at different dates, died twelve years apart, their families, the names of their widows, and inventory of their estates being different also. Of the Charlestown John Sibley, it is recorded by Wyman, in his "Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown, Massachusetts," as follows: "Sibley John; adm. with wife, December 21, 1634, 5; mr. Sarah who mr. Francis Chickering, [1] (3) John Bowles [1] died November 30, 1649. Issue, Sarah, mr. Francis Dwight. Estates: 4 acres planting ground; home 2 acres; 4 acres at Linefield; 1 acre at South Mead; 2½ acres cow common; 10 acres woods; 28 acres Waterfield."<sup>3</sup> Of this Charlestown Sibley, Felt also says, "John Sibley, with Sarah his wife, united with the church at Charlestown, Massachusetts, December 21, 1634, and died at Charlestown, November 30, 1649. His name is spelled 'Sibilie' in 1650, in the record of his estate."<sup>4</sup> The inventory differs from that given by J. Langdon Sibley, as also does the record that John Sibley of Charlestown was married, and had issue, although their names are not produced. In the inventory in the probate office, East Cambridge, are mentioned things other than are found in Wyman's account, as, for instance, this entry, "Armes, a corslet, headpiece, sword, and pike." This looks much like the costume of the "Hew-Agag-in-pieces" kind of men, who lived just before and during the Cromwellian times; men of the "*Caput Rotundum*," who always prayed before making a cavalry charge, then plunging, "with the high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand," dashed through the foe, and doxologized loud on the other side, shouting, "Such honor have all saints; Praise ye the Lord!" At

1 Genealogical Dict. of New England, Vol. IV, pp. 93, 94.

2 Barber's Man. Hist. Coll., p. 225.

3 Wyman's Genealog. and Estates, Vol. II, p. 865.

4 Felt's Annals of Salem, Vol. I, p. 172.

any rate, it was the sort of stuff of which the stalwarts of yore were made; men who knew how to take off the head of a king, demolish a throne, dismiss the commons at will, clear the seas of pirates, and demand cessation of persecution against the Piedmontese, the guns of Cromwell threatening to pulverize the castle of St. Angelo. Of such stuff, doubtless, were the New England Sibleys.

Plainly, the Salem Sibley and the Charlestown Sibley are different persons. That they were of the same connection, there can be no doubt. That they crossed together, at the time of the "Winthrop Fleet," is admitted by all writers except Savage, whose doubt is based simply on the fact that he had not seen the original record. He does not question Felt's statement that "John Sibley, Salem, came over with Higginson, 1629," but simply intimates that he has "not seen the evidence."<sup>1</sup> He adds this, however, "John Sibley, Charlestown, 1634, wife Sarah, freeman May 6, 1634, spelled with "e" in first syllable, died November 30, 1649." The evidence we have, therefore, is that of contemporary history, official records of churches, courts, and colony, and uncontradicted universal tradition.<sup>2</sup> It is certain that two Sibleys are found as early as 1634, or within three years of 1630, the one at Charlestown, the other at Salem, both uniting with the church the same year, and one declared to be the sixteenth on the list of members in the First church at Salem, the earliest Protestant church in the New World. Official records furnish public notices of both. This, and the facts that both were selectmen so soon, land owners in many different places, prominent and influential in public affairs, argue their association with the 2,000 who came over in the fleet to make a "firm plant." And the universal tradition, uncontradicted for more than two and a half centuries, is more than enough to establish a claim, which, were its evidence applied to the investigation of an ancient title deed, would be deemed conclusive. The testimony of Prince that some of the company made Salem their home, while others made Charlestown, is not without significance for our inquiry. The questions of

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<sup>1</sup> Savage's Genealogical Dict., Vol. IV, pp. 93, 94; Hist. of Union, by J. L. Sibley, p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> See Hotten's Original Lists of Persons of Quality, Emigrants, Religious Exiles, Political Rebels, Serving Men, Maidens pressed, and others, who went from Great Britain to the American Plantations, 1600-1700, N. Y. 1874. Introd., pp. 31, 24, 28.

importance are (1) the relation of the Charlestown to the Salem Sibley, (2) the immediate links between the English and American Sibleys in 1629, or even in 1634. To detect the immediate link that existed, in times of civil war, disturbance of the archives, and exchange of an Old World for the New, in a genealogy extending back nine generations, is a work of special difficulty. Like difficult it is to detect the immediate link in the line, still backward among the St. Albans Sibleys, fifteen generations ago. That such links are recorded, somewhere, no reasonable antiquarian or archæologist can doubt.

That the "Salem Sibleys" are the blood progenitors of the "Sutton Sibleys," Massachusetts, is indisputable history, a history that rests upon the universal tradition and collateral proof that "John Sibley" of Salem crossed the high seas in the "Winthrop Fleet" of 1629. In the standard and painstaking "History of Sutton," a large volume of rare interest, the record is made by official action of the "Town of Sutton," thus: "The *first* Sibleys in this country came over from England in the fleet, A. D. 1629,—only nine years after the settlement of old Plymouth,—and settled in the town of Salem. They were supposed to be brothers, and their names were John and Richard. They both had wives. They united with the church December 21, 1634, and John Sibley took the freeman's oath May 6, 1635. He was a selectman of the town of Salem and went to the general court at Boston. He died, 1661, leaving nine children, five daughters and four sons. His sons' names are *John*, born March 4, 1648, a captain and selectman; *William*, born July 8, 1653; *Joseph*, born 1655; *Samuel*, born February 12, 1657; *Joseph Sibley, the son of John, was born 1665. This Joseph was the father of the Sutton Sibleys, his wife's name Susanna.* They had seven children, one daughter, Haunah, who married Ebenezer Daggett, August 10, 1722. The sons were Joseph, John, Jonathan, Samuel, William, Benjamin. Three of these, Joseph, John, and Jonathan, all brothers, were among the thirty families who were entered as settlers in the 4,000 acres. Samuel's name appears, soon after, as occupying a place with Joseph, and, in the seating of the meeting house in 1731, the names of William and Benjamin Sibley are found assigned to the fifth seat on the lower floor."<sup>1</sup> This clear record tells the story of the pioneer family, and reveals the Sutton

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<sup>1</sup> History of Sutton, 1704-1876, p. 718.

*ancestor of Henry Hastings Sibley of St Paul.* That ancestor is *Joseph Sibley of Sutton, third son of John Sibley of Salem*, his Salem ancestor being seven generations distant from him.

The township of Sutton, where these six Sibley brothers began their pioneer work, was a tract of land eight miles square, embracing an Indian reservation bought from John Wampus by a company called the "Proprietors of Sutton," and consisting of thirty families, pledged to improve the same. In 1704, or seventy-five years from the time of the "Winthrop Fleet," it was founded. The deed conveying the land is quaint enough. It passes the right and title to the thirty families, of which the Sibleys were six, "together with all and singular the pastures, soils, swamps, meadows, rivers, pools, ponds, woods and underwoods, trees, timber, stones, fishing, fowling and hunting rights, members, hereditaments, emoluments, profits, privileges, and appurtenances thereto belonging or in any way appertaining; the same to be called Sutton; to have and to use and to hold, to exercise and enjoy; yielding to our sovereign lady, Queen Anne, and her successors, forever, one-fifth part of the gold, silver, and precious stones, from time to time and at all times, which forever hereafter shall happen to be found, gotten, gained, or obtained in any of said lands and premises, or within any part or parcel thereof, etc. Dated at Boston, May 15th, in the year of her Majesty's reign, Anno Domini 1704:—J. Dudley, Esq." <sup>1</sup> Such the land, and the deed of the land, each *bona fide* settler and head of family having a "thirty-acre lot" and a "five hundred-acre right." Among the chief "ponds" are mentioned "Dorothy pond," "Ramshorn pond," and "Crooked pond;" and among the chief caves, "the cavern commonly called *Purgatory* where the *icicles* hang from the crevices of the rocks, and even solid bodies of ice are found, although the descent is to the south; a stupendous place that fills the mind of the beholder with exalted ideas of the infinite power of the Creator." <sup>2</sup>

Like the early Puritan stock, the Sibleys were all a religious and God-fearing people, as were the Whipplees with whom their names are always associated. At the town meeting, whose government was simply that of selectmen, chosen by the people, it was "voated," March 5, 1717, that "the carrying on of the worship of God and building a meeting house shall

<sup>1</sup> History of Sutton, 1704-1876, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

begin from this day, and twenty pounds be raised to be paid into the clerk's hands for that use,"<sup>1</sup> an enterprise prosecuted with vigor, the church edifice being completed within the following year, "40 x 36 feet, folding doors in front, lighted by two windows of diamond glass at each side and end for the lower floor, one of the same size for each end of the gallery, the seats ordinary benches, with backs; the minister to receive a yearly salary, and a committee to acquaint Mr. John McKinstree that the town has voated him a call to the ministry, and to ask his acceptance, and that he be ordained Wednesday, November 9, 1720."<sup>2</sup> How thoroughly in earnest these Puritans were, with religion as the chief thing, and their "acres" of second importance, the world knows. "It concerneth New England," says one, "to always remember that it is a religious plantation, and not a commercial one. The profession of pure doctrine, worship, and a godly discipline, is written on her forehead. Worldly gain was not the end or design of the people of New England, but religion. If, therefore, any man among us shall make religion as *twelve*, and the world as *thirteen*, such an one hath not the spirit of a true New England man."<sup>3</sup> Such was the tone not only at Chelmsford where these words were spoken, but also at Sutton. In morals, the town of Sutton, under the rule of selectmen such as the Sibleys and Whipples, seemed faultless. The only crime that appeared to disturb the conscience of the upright was the appalling outburst of luxury in connection with the town's increasing prosperity, as seen in the atrocious custom of "drinking tea with a silver spoon out of a china cup." It had already come to this in 1720, that "the tradesman's wife sips tea, for an hour at a time, out of chinaware, morning and afternoon, and there is a silver spoon, silver trays, besides other trinkets; the chief blame falling on Madame Hall, who had the first tea-kettle ever brought to Sutton, and Deacon Pierce's wife the second; holding a pint each; and there has been no birth in our town for some time!"<sup>4</sup> The times were changing. March 4, 1723, it was "voated," in view of the progress of the town, "to seat the meeting house so as to please the town," and also "to have respect to persons,"

1 Hist. of Sutton, 1704-1876, p. 74.

2 Ibid., p. 23.

3 Election Sermon, Allen's Hist. of Chelmsford, p. 3.

4 Hist. of Sutton, 1704-1802.



especially inquiring "what charges they now bear, and what they are likely to do in the future,"—a worldly compromise with those of the teapot and silver-spoon brigade against which Mr. Jonathan Sibley deemed it his duty "to dissent." To appease the rising indignation, Mr. John Whipple, and Mr. Sibley, with others, were made a "comitty" to consider the matter, dispose of the pews righteously, assigning to each man his place, the pews not to be longer than four or five feet, nor deeper than about four, the "proper persons" to be seated therein. Upon the report of the "comitty" all things were satisfactorily adjusted, John Whipple's pew being "5 foot 3 inches long and 5 foot 6 inches deep," Jonathan Sibley's "about the same," Joseph Sibley's "4 foot 3 inches long," and John Sibley's "3 foot 3 inches long;"—and so the "affares of the House of God were settled," the church commending the diligence and wisdom of the "comitty." In view, however, of the dangerous tendency to luxury, fulness of bread, and pride, it was deemed "expedient that there be a day of fasting and prayer." The town continuing to prosper, and a rearrangement of seats again becoming necessary, and social relations having somewhat changed, another "comitty" was duly appointed, whose report, although adopted, was apparently not as satisfactory, in all respects, as could, by some, have been desired. It provided that "In ye front seat shall sit Mr. Samuel Sible and six others. In ye fifth seat William Sibly, Benjamin Sibly, and four others. In ye second seat, in side gallery, Joseph Sibly and ye Widoes Rich and Stockwell. In ye fore seat, in ye front gallery, ye Widdoe Mary Sibly, by herself; and it is to be understood that all ye wimmin that have husbands of their own are seated equal with their own husbands, in their own pews."<sup>1</sup>

If the pew system and its patrons required attention, not less, as even now is always the case, did the "music of the House of God" need special supervision. The young people, among whom were "Joseph, John, James, Elizabeth," and many other "Sibleys," were somewhat progressive in their tastes, and fond of "novelties." The worship, however, was simple and devout, the singing led by a precentor, the hymn or psalm being "lined out" that all might "take part in this important branch of divine service." The tunes were few and good, it being "voated that the old tunes, like old wine,

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Sutton, 1704-1876, pp. 147, 148.

are ye better, and be studied and learnt, as Old Hundred and Canterbury, and that David Town and John Harbach be helpful in this service, and don't set the tune called the 34th Psalm which so many are offended at; and the following tunes, Buckland, Bangor, Funeral Thought, New York, Little Marlborough, Plymouth, St. Martins, Colchester, Windsor, Amherst, Trinity, and Aurora be sung, provided there be no objection made." Tradition relates that things went on harmoniously till, one Sunday, the old Puritan blood got somewhat the better of the grace that was in it, the singers running a competing race while singing, with Deacon Tarrant while reading, the hymn, both trying to see which of the two would first reach the end of the verse, both landing at the same goal, about the same time, the harmony not quite as Sabbatic as it should have been. The congregation were confounded, and the pastor, Mr. Hall, standing up in the pulpit and saying "he had no hand in the matter," was replied to by the free remark of one who instantly rose in the audience, saying, "David Hall, you lie! Sally, it's time for us to go home!"—the irate saint henceforth absenting himself from the stated means of grace.

What prominence the Sibleys had in early New England history, the records abundantly show. They appear foremost in every good work. As selectmen they seem to have been perpetuated in office through all their generations. As leaders in the church they are not less eminent. Their names stand among the founders of the church in Sutton. Their children are recorded as "themselves entering into covenant with God, their parents presenting them for admission to the church." It is Jonathan Sibley who is on "ye comitty" to build the church, and seat the people. It is Samuel Sibley who is "elected a deacon." It is John Sibley and Lieutenant Joseph Sibley who, with others, are to "vu the meeting house, and, with Reverent Mr. Hall, join in loaning out the ministerial land." It is Captain Joseph Sibley who "treetts with ye Minister about ye Deficiencie in sallery," recommends "in vu of ye general run of Provision and Clothing that we apprehend One Hundred and Fifty pounds," and "bring ye sallery up to ye standard," and again sees "whether ye Town hath fulfilled its original agreement with ye minister Cording to ye true intent thereof." And as to beautifying the town, and providing a "public Parke" it is John Sibley who appears in



the foreground, and, because of his love for animals and law-abiding character, it is "voated that John Sibley, Junr., be a man to take care of ye Dear in ye Provence that they be not killed Contrary to law." Everywhere, in all matters of importance relating to the common weal, in church or state, in agriculture, commerce, education, law, finance, order, politics, religion, war or peace, the Sibleys stand out as foremost figures in the history of New England. Their name is "Legion." They swarm. Sutton is their hive. In West Sutton we find Rufus, Nathaniel, Frank, Freeman, Levius, Almon, Darius, Moses, Sarah, Aaron, Gideon Sibley. In the Putnam Hill district are Elijah, Daniel, Stephen, Tarrant, Abner, Simeon, Elihu, Joseph, Jonathan, William, Benjamin, Samuel, Paul, Reuben, Francis, Nahum, Peter, Arthur, Timothy, Oliver, Hannah, Susanna, Huldah, Mary Sibley. In the "Eight Lots" district are Jonathan and Timothy. In the Centre district, Jonas, Jonas L., Pierpont, John M., Gibbs, Nehemiah, Elijah, Caleb, Sylvester, Mary Ann. And all are interlaced and intermingled in a network of intermarriages, crossing and recrossing, with the Putnams and Whipples, the Bigelows and Sumners, the Pierponts and Moses, the Lelands and Wheelocks, the Tarrants and Bancrofts, the Dudleys and the Spragues, and, later down in the flow of their generations, with the Wellses and Conklings, the Livingstons and Chases, and other influential families; a remarkable connection, found in almost every rank and profession of civilized life, artisans, farmers, merchants, business men of every description, ministers, elders, deacons, church wardens, rectors, canons, bankers, physicians, surgeons in the army, the navy, at the bar, on the bench, in academies and colleges, and in the halls of the Continental and the late National Congress; graduates of Harvard, Yale, Union, Williams, Dartmouth, and Princeton colleges. Traced through their affiliated lines, and their various connections, appear names of high distinction in the annals of the several states, and of the nation; Captains Nathaniel and Jonathan, noted, in Revolutionary times; Samuel Sibley, raising money "to relieve Boston and Charlestown suffering under the Boston Port Bill," and "reporting approval of what the Continental Congress had done;" Colonel Timothy Sibley, securing "five thousand pounds sterling," after the battles of Lexington and Concord, "to pay the Continental men sent to Rhode Island," and, after the close of the war, "incorporating his

own estate, with those of others, into the First Congregational Society of Sutton;" Hon. Jonas Sibley; Jonas L. Sibley, Esq., "a man of fine presence, pre-eminently a public-spirited man, a true lawyer, with a docket of cases no less than eighty for a single term of court;" Hon. Mark H. Sibley of Canandaigua, a man of rare national distinction;<sup>1</sup> Hon. Sumner Cole of Sutton; Rev. John Langdon Sibley, librarian of Harvard, and full of literary labor; Rev. J. Willard Morse of Sutton, "one of the finest of men, and ablest of preachers," a son of Huldah Sibley, "one of the noblest women of the West," and cousin of Henry Hastings Sibley; Chief Justice Solomon Sibley of Detroit; the celebrated Dr. Henry Wells, "Henry of Montague," a young graduate bearing away the honors of Princeton, re-honored at Yale and Dartmouth with two separate degrees; the not less distinguished Dr. John Sibley of Natchitoches, Louisiana; Oscar E. Sibley of Albany, New York; the brilliant lawyer, and monumental benefactor in the cause of education, Hiram Sibley of Rochester, New York; George E. Sibley, Esq., of New York City; Brevet Major General Caleb Sibley of the United States Army, a first cousin of Henry Hastings Sibley. To these must be added the names of Septimus Sibley, M. D., London, England, Hon. Henry Hopkins Sibley of St. Louis, and Major General Henry Hopkins Sibley of the Confederate Army, with the distinguished name of Josiah Sibley of Augusta, Georgia, at whose recent decease it was said, "he was one of those temperate, liberty-loving, Godfearing people whom they, who rise up after, call blessed; the leading elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta, a man of vast wealth, large family, high public spirit; among the most esteemed of Augusta's citizens, giving stability to all her enterprises, and whose name has been associated with Augusta's progress for nearly fifty years, "an honest man, the noblest work of God.'"

Nor are we to forget Richard Sibley of New York, who married Mary Wessels, 1744, and Richard Sibley of Stamford, Connecticut, who married Mary Peet of New York, 1792, both noted in their day. The names of Huldah, Elizabeth, Catherine Whipple, Sarah and Mary Ann, are among the shining

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, in an address to the Massachusetts Historical Society, July, 1878, speaks of "finding on the walls of the mansion of Mrs. Greig of Canandaigua, widow of Hon. John Greig, the portraits of the late Daniel Barnard, Hon. Mark H. Sibley, and Stephen A. Douglas, all distinguished in the annals of Congress." *Peabody Mass. Hist. Coll.*, Vol. XIII, p. 67.

ones in this vast connection. Many, indeed, occupied more humble walks of life, but in whatever sphere, it is recorded as the "bright particular star" that beamed on the forehead of each, so far as tradition's tongue can speak, that "personal integrity was the family characteristic of all the Sibleys, from the highest to the lowest." The name "Sibley" became a "synonym for justice, honesty, and truth," not less than for "benevolence to men." "It has never been known," says the Rev. J. Langdon Sibley, "that any of our family were ever *hanged*, however much they might have *deserved* to be, nor to have been punished for any civil offense."<sup>1</sup>

How thoroughly Puritanic this celebrated stock was, is seen in the names transmitted to the children, generation after generation. Adam, the great progenitor, we do not find. But among the antediluvians Noah stands prominent as ever. Among the patriarchs are the three great stem-fathers of the Hebrew race, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and among the sons of Jacob we find Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Joseph, and Benjamin. Among the prophets are Moses, Elijah, Joel, Amos, Jonas, Nathan, Nahum, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Among the old generals and judges, Joshua, Caleb, Barak, Gideon, Jephtha, and Samuel. Among the kings, David, Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah, and David's friend Jonathan. Among the old reformers and restorers, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel. Among the evangelists, Matthew and Mark; and among the apostles, Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Thomas, Nathaniel, Thaddeus, Paul; with their helpers, Silas, Stephen, Timothy, Rufus. Nor less prominently do we find the names of Israel's women of renown: Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Huldah, Tamar, Ruth, Naomi, Abigail, Azubah, with Esther, and Vashti of Persian fame. Also, of New Testament names, Mary, Martha, Elizabeth, Anna, Joanna, Susanna, Lydia, Dorcas, Persis, Eunice, Priscilla, Phoebe. And, not to be utterly restricted to Scripture names, we find Scripture words used as names, Pardon Sibley, Experience Sibley, Temperance Sibley, Patience Sibley, and Prudence Sibley. And, in memory of distinguished family connections, we read of a John Pierpont, Sumner Cole, Edward Livingston, Franklin Sumner, Alexander Hamilton, John Hopkins, John Whipple Sibley, etc., family nomenclature crowned with Darius, Alexander, Augustus and Horace,

<sup>1</sup> History of Union, p. 499.

Archelaus and Pliny, Frederick and Oliver, Luther and Calvin. True to their environment, heredity, and genealogy, some curious stories are told by the Sibleys, reflecting no more the color of the times than the individuality of the persons, impossible to be of neutral hue. A stone wall nine miles in circumference is a monument to the untiring diligence of Captain Samuel Sibley of West Sutton, and his utilization of the streams of "Purgatory" for sawmill purposes attests his shrewd practical character. The roots of pond lilies, planted by another, in Union, send forth their stalks and bloom to this day. The same love of beauty, however, was not without its sterner side. It is a well-authenticated fact that the very man who planted these lily roots, Jonathan Sibley, fourth son of Samuel and Sarah Sibley of Sutton, "whipped his beer barrel because it worked on Sunday, and his cat because she caught a mouse when he was at prayers."<sup>1</sup> While nothing is recorded as to what punishment was inflicted on those who frequented the spigot, or examined the bung, on the first day of the week, it is a breath of comfort, in our modern days of agitation upon the temperance question, to know that the original Pilgrims and children of the Puritans gave to the "beer barrel," at least, a sound trouncing for its Sunday transgressions, and that even mice were not exempt from accountability to Colonial Laws. It is related, further, concerning the same Sibley, that, when married to Sarah Dow, himself short of stature, his bride tall beyond ordinary height, "he stood upon a wooden oven lid," in order to overcome the inequality between them, and secure the tying of the knot more firmly. The length of his bride was, moreover, of great advantage in the days of their pioneer life. Accustomed to carry, on horseback, his corn to the mill, nine miles distant, and bring his salt from Exeter,—his nearest neighbors three miles away,—his practice was to secure the courtesy of Mr. Benjamin Perkins, as protector of his wife in "keeping the bears off the corn-patch," during his absence. It happened one moonlight night, "fair Cynthia smiling over Nature's soft repose," that a terrible crash was suddenly heard in the corn-stalks. Leaving her four children, and calling Perkins to her aid, Mrs. Sibley hastened to the scene of depredation, Perkins firing his gun, and wounding, but not disabling, the bear. With long-stepping motion, swiftly pursuing the game, "she caught the

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Union, p. 503.

bear, at last, by the hind leg, as he was climbing over a log," and "held on," with the grip of a tar at the ship's rope, until Perkins came up and dispatched the animal by "cutting his throat with a jack-knife."<sup>1</sup> Such brides and mothers are rare in our times. It is also stated that "the last wig" worn in Sutton was worn by Colonel Timothy Sibley, A. D. 1800.

The wife of Samuel Sibley, son of the first John Sibley of Salem, 1692, was clearly a devout woman, yet of a keen inventive genius, and withal deeply interested in devising some means whereby to detect "*witches*," whose love of Salem as a place for their equestrian broom-stick aerial performances was proverbial. "She lived in that unhappy village," says her pastor, the Rev. Mr. Paris, "where she raised the Devil by advising John, an Indian, how to make 'cake.'" It seems the "cake" was made,—perhaps rather indigestible,—a part of which Mrs. Sibley (Sister Mary) sent, in kindness, to the pastor's mansion. The result was, according to the pastor's testimony, that the whole village was "immediately and sorely vexed with the Devil, and amazing feats were done by witchcraft and diabolical operations; nay, it never broke forth to any considerable extent until by this cake-making under the direction of our sister Mary; since which time *apparitions* have been exceeding much; so that, by this means, the Devil hath been raised among us, and when he shall be silenced the Lord only knows; and that our dear sister should have been instrumental in such distress grieveth us much, and our godly neighbors." As a matter of course, Sister Sibley was "suspended from the communion of the church," because she taught Indian John how to make cake. "But, inasmuch as our honored sister doth truly fear the Lord, and did what she did ignorantly, and while we are in duty bound to protest against this cake-making as being indeed a going to the Devil for help *against* the Devil,—a thing contrary to nature and God's word,—we do, nevertheless, continue her, in our holy fellowship, upon her serious promise of future better advisedness and caution." Sister Mary's case was happily terminated. "Brethren," said the pastor, to the church, at the close of the Sacrament, on the Lord's day, "if this be your mind, manifest it now, by the usual sign of lifting up your hands. The brethren voted universally. Then the pastor said, Sister Sibley, if you are convinced that you herein did

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Union, p. 503.

sinfully, and are sorry for it, just let us hear now a word from your own mouth. And Sister Sibley did manifest sweetly, to the satisfaction of all, her error and grief for the same. Brethren, if you are satisfied, continued the pastor, just testify by lifting your hands. And a universal vote was had, none excepting."<sup>1</sup>

In our days of modern progress and religious culture, we affect indignation and greet with contempt what we call the "superstitions of the Puritans." It would be more to our credit, could we ever attain to their downright earnestness in religion, fear of God, and respect for his word, notwithstanding their mistakes in many things. In language the most express he had legislated, saying, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," Exod. 22:18. He sent a king of Israel into fetters and a dungeon, because he "used witchcraft and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with a wizard," 2 Chron. 38:6, that "sorcery" and "witchcraft" which an apostle has placed among the "works of the flesh," and whose doom is "the lake of fire." Gal. 5:20, Rev. 21:8. Before condemning the Puritans too roundly, it were well to remember that, not only the Witch of Endor, the Gadarene demoniac, and the Pythoness who followed Paul, and ancient history, sacred and profane, attest the reality of the commerce of "evil spirits" with mankind, but that, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, their influence overspread all Europe. Already, in 1317, Pope John XXII. complained that his courtiers had "made a compact with hell, demanding of the demons speech and answer." Papal bulls were issued in 1404, 1448, against "the increase of sorcery, and seeking to the dead." In the fifteenth century, not only the Maid of Orleans was burned as a witch, by order of the Earl of Bedford, but 100,000 in Germany, 1,500 in Switzerland, 1,000 at Como, and 900 females at Lorraine, suffered at the hands of the executioner, for witchcraft, the jails being insufficient to hold, and the judges too few to try, them. In the sixteenth century, Bishop Jewell appealed to Queen Elizabeth to enforce the laws, severe as they were. No less than 30,000 were executed in England, among whom were the Maid of Kent, the Duke of Buckingham, the Duchess of Gloucester, and Lord Hungerford. Bibles were burned as a pledge of fealty to the new faith, and the truths of Christianity began to be rejected as irreconcilable with the new revela-

<sup>1</sup> Mass. Hist. Coll., Vol. XI, pp. 320, 321.



tions made. It was the same influence that afflicted the Puritans of the seventeenth century, the demonic spiritism that afflicts our own age, to an extent not realized, a form of satanic manifestation of which it was predicted, that, "in the last times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, speaking lies, in hypocrisy," 1 Tim. 4:1. Witchcraft is no unsolved phenomenon, and modern media conversing with "the spirits of the dead," are but the reappearance "of Bessie Dunlop interviewing Thomas Reid, killed in battle, and of Miss Throgmorton speaking with Pluck Hardman, deceased."<sup>1</sup> We must give the Puritans the benefit of this. The Salem pastor, were he living, would rebuke our modern necromancing with familiar spirits. As for "Sister Mary," her awful crime was that of teaching Indian John how to make cake, wholly indigestible. That was certainly an atrocious offense, more due, however, to the character of the ingredients, the condition of the fire, or want of experience, than to the immediate influence of Satan, and all historians of the circumstance rejoice at her escape, so easily, from a sentence which only was averted by the goodness of those whose love of justice and tenderness of heart were equal to their fear of God and hatred of the Devil.<sup>2</sup> Say what we may of these Godfearing men and cake-making women, who whipped their beer casks for working on Sunday and punished their cats for catching mice during prayer, and "raised the Devil in Salem," they were yet the stock whose offspring were the founders of our institutions, the bulwark of our civil and religious liberties, and whose descendants now tread the continent from Atlantic to Pacific and from the Southern Gulf to the Frozen Zone. It was of them Berkeley sang, in his ode on the "Planting of Arts and Learning in America;"<sup>2</sup> a race of men

"Not such as Europe breeds in her decay,  
But as she bred when fresh and young,  
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,  
By future ages to be sung.

"Westward the course of empire takes its way,  
The first four acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama of the day,  
Time's noblest offspring is the last."

<sup>1</sup> See Sir Walter Scott's *Witchcraft and Demonology*, passim.

<sup>2</sup> See 3 Mass. Hist. Coll., Vol. III, p. 170; Drake's Hist. and Geneal. Register, Vol. XI, pp. 133-135; Fleet's Annals of Salem, Vol. II, p. 476; Savage's Geneal. Hist. of New England, Vol. IV, p. 94.

The Sibleys have a proud record in Colonial and Revolutionary times. In civil life, they appear continuously as selectmen, assessors, moderators of council, lawyers, representatives, and physicians in one unbroken stream, ever widening and deepening as it flows down to the present day. In military life they seem to be ubiquitous, holding every rank, from the lowest to the highest, save that of supreme commander of the forces of the nation: private, drummer-boy, ensign, corporal, sergeant, captain, major, lieutenant, colonel, general, major general, promoted, brevetted, and praised by legislature and by Congress for their meritorious services. From 1755 to 1761 we find the names of Ensign Jonathan, Drummer-Boy Elijah, Captain John, Captain James, the son-in-law of the renowned General Israel Putnam, and Privates John, Jonathan, Elihu, David, Joseph, Sr., Joseph, Jr., father and son, side by side with shouldered musket in the same company. William, Sr., William, Jr., Stephen, Jonas, Samuel, Henry, and Frank. In the Revolutionary Army it is Captain Nathaniel, Captain Jonathan, Captain Solomon, Corporal David, Colonel Timothy, and Privates Daniel, David, Richard, Stephen, John, William, Joseph, Abner, and others too many to name. Among the "Minute Men" who marched "on the Alarm" from Sutton to Concord, August 19, 1775, when Putnam left his plow in the furrow, and Paul Revere struck fire from the hoofs of his bounding steed, and the "first blood for independence" was shed, were Joseph, Daniel, Elihu, Gideon, Peter, Samuel, Tarrant, William, Jonathan, John. At Ticonderoga they fought under Colonel Jonathan Holmes of the Fifth Massachusetts, brother-in-law of Joseph Sibley. From the days of the infamous "Stamp Act," 1764, passed by Parliament to tax unrepresented men for revenue, and support the crown in its purpose to oppress, down to the time of the "Boston Port Bill," and thence to the close of the war for independence, the Sibleys were among the first, in the ranks of the army, on the sea, in Colonial councils, and in the Continental Congress, battling for freedom, serving their country, enduring all manner of self-sacrifice, and earning a name that will not pass away.

The immediate ancestor of Henry Hastings Sibley was Chief Justice Solomon Sibley of Detroit, Michigan, born in the old "Henry Sibley Stockwell place," Sutton, Massachusetts, October 7, 1769, six years before the Revolutionary War.



Endowed with rare intellectual gifts, he entered the legal profession, after the completion of his academic education, having studied law under William Hastings of Boston, an eminent member of the Massachusetts bar. Rising rapidly in distinction, he came to Marietta, Ohio, 1795, in the twenty-sixth year of his age; thence removing to Cincinnati, 1796, and forming a law partnership with Judge Burnet, but finally making Detroit, Michigan, his home, where, January 15, 1799, he was elected as the "first delegate, from Wayne county, to the first territorial legislature of the Northwest, met at Chillicothe, Ohio." He was married to Sarah Whipple Sproat, October, 1802, at Marietta. In the same year he drafted and introduced into the legislature the act to incorporate the city of Detroit, and was voted the freedom of the city for his ability and success in securing the passage of the act. In 1806 he became mayor of the city, by appointment from Governor William Hull, with the whole power of the corporation vested in himself, the law being that "every act or bill passed by both chambers, before it becomes a law, shall be presented to the mayor for his approval, and if not approved, shall be returned to the chamber where it is passed, there to remain *in statu quo, until the Judgment-day, without further reconsideration.*"<sup>1</sup> In 1814 he was auditor of public accounts, and remained so three years. In 1815, when, under the administration of the Hon. Lewis Cass, the city gained control of its local affairs, he was one of five trustees of the city, appointed by the governor, as guardians of the city, and was, moreover, aid-de-camp to the governor as commander-in-chief of the military forces of the territory. In 1817 he was United States Commissioner, in connection with General Cass, to treat with the Indians for territory now included in the State of Michigan. In 1818 he was elected a director in the Bank of Michigan. In 1820 he was sent to the United States Congress as the representative of the Territory of Michigan. In 1821 he became one of the trustees of the University of Michigan, then opened in the city of Detroit. In 1824-1837 he sat upon the judicial bench of the territory, his court being always opened in the old semi-military style, "Attention! Attention, the whole! Silence on penalty! Oyez! Oyez! Give ear to the cause you wish to be heard!" and was the chief justice from 1827-1837. Under the ordinance of 1787,

1. Farmer's Hist. of Detroit, p. 184.

whereby the governor and territorial judges are made the legislative power, he became, after reaching the bench, member of the legislative body that met at Marietta and Cincinnati, Ohio, and afterward at Detroit. Fond of horticulture, it is related, and the story is confirmed by the personal testimony of Henry Hastings Sibley, that, in 1827, he "grew a pear seven and one-half inches long, fourteen and one-half inches in circumference, and weighing thirty ounces."<sup>1</sup> For more than fifty years he was one of Detroit's most influential and public-spirited citizens, and died, April 4, 1846, universally lamented. One of the main streets of the city bears his name. In honor of his memory, the members of the bar of Detroit, and officials of the various courts, together with the first citizens of the place, assembled to express in fitting words their esteem of his noble character, and sad regret at his demise, and, as a testimonial of their sincerity, his legal brethren wore the badge of mourning the usual time.

Recorded memorials of his merit are numerous and flattering. Mrs. Ellett speaks of Mr. Sibley as "a young lawyer of high standing."<sup>2</sup> Judge Burnet says "he was one of the most talented men in the house of representatives, possessed of a sound mind, improved by liberal education, and a stability of character that commanded general respect, and seemed to have the confidence and esteem of his fellow members."<sup>3</sup> The Hon. George C. Bates, one of Detroit's most brilliant men, said of him, when extolling his judicial qualities, "He was a most venerable judge, careful and patient, and deciding only after the most mature deliberation. His long gray hair, projecting eye-brows, and heavy set jaws, gave him very much the air of Chief Justice Shaw of Massachusetts, whom Choate compared to the natives' view of their Indian god."<sup>4</sup> The late Samuel Williams of Cincinnati, father of J. Fletcher Williams, librarian of the Minnesota State Historical Society, in a memorial of ex-Governor Tiffin of Ohio, written years ago, mentions a visit from Judge Sibley to Dr. Tiffin, then surveyor general at Chillicothe, in 1816, to talk over the scenes of the territorial legislature of 1799, of which both had been members. Mr. Williams, who was Tiffin's chief clerk,

<sup>1</sup> Farmer's Hist. of Detroit, p 15.

<sup>2</sup> Pioneer Women of the West, p 217.

<sup>3</sup> History of Sutton, 1704-1876, p 720.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p 720, 721.

was usually present when they conversed over the exciting scenes of their legislative career, and related that Dr. Tiffin remarked at one time, "In our debates, Mr. Sibley, I wished a thousand times that I could have the same calm, philosophic, and imperturbable spirit which you possessed. I saw and felt the advantage it gave you in debate." "And I," laughingly replied the Judge, "well remember, Doctor, how often I wished that I could infuse into my remarks the same ardor of feeling which you displayed in yours!"<sup>1</sup> This incident illustrates one of the prominent traits of character in Judge Sibley which made him so safe a jurist, and so wise a counselor, and has been perpetuated and reflected in the person of Henry Hastings Sibley not less conspicuously. The brothers of Judge Sibley were three, viz., Reuben, Jonathan, Nathaniel. The sisters were five, viz., Phoebe, Martha, Hannah, Ruth, Huldah. The sons of Judge Sibley were four in number, Colonel Ebenezer Sproat Sibley of the regular army, educated at West Point and bearing away the honors of his class, Henry Hastings, Alexander Hamilton, and Frederic B. The daughters were five, Catherine W., Catherine Whipple, Mary S., Augusta Ann, Sarah Alexandrine. Catherine W. died in infancy. Catherine Whipple married C. C. Trowbridge of Detroit, both now deceased. Mary S. married Charles Adams of Detroit, both now deceased. Augusta Ann married James Armstrong of Detroit, both now deceased. Alexander Hamilton married Marie Louise Miller, and is deceased, his widow and family surviving. Frederic B. and Sarah Alexandrine are unmarried. Henry Hastings married Sarah Steele of Minnesota, who died May 21, 1869.

The mother of Henry Hastings Sibley was Sarah Whipple Sproat, wife of Judge Solomon Sibley. Mrs Solomon Sibley, born in Providence, Rhode Island, January 28, 1782, was the only daughter of Colonel Ebenezer Sproat, a Revolutionary soldier, who married Catherine Whipple, daughter of Commodore Abraham Whipple, who married Sarah Hopkins, sister of Stephen Hopkins, governor of Rhode Island, one of the signers of the "Declaration of Independence." Mrs. Sibley's parents and grandparents were pioneers of both Ohio and Michigan, and achieved for themselves an imperishable name for their devotion to the cause of human liberty, their self-sacrifices and endurance of hardships, toils, and dangers, in the midst of

<sup>1</sup> History of Seneca County, Ohio, by W Lang, 1880, p. 201.

Revolutionary times, the War of 1812, and various Indian wars connected with the settlement of the Northwest Territory. From Abraham Whipple and Sarah Hopkins came Catherine Whipple. From Ebenezer Sproat and Catherine Whipple came Sarah Whipple Sproat. From Solomon Sibley and Sarah Whipple Sproat came Henry Hastings Sibley.

Of Commodore Whipple, born 1733, the maternal great-grandfather of Henry Hastings, Revolutionary history has preserved a thrilling memorial. He was the son of John Whipple, the companion of Roger Williams, and looms into view first of all as the night organizer of a little fleet of row-boats to capture the British revenue sloop *Gaspee*, of eight guns, stationed in Narragansett bay, to enforce the British tax upon goods and search every vessel scudding between Newport and Providence. June 10, 1772, the *Gaspee*, chasing the Newport packet, grounded, by blunder of the pilot, upon a spit of land opposite Namquit point, the packet escaping capture. Captain Whipple at once organized an expedition of eight longboats, and pulling away from the shore, rowlocks and oars muffled, a captain at each tiller, himself in the lead, with paving-stones, boulders, clubs, a few muskets, some ball and a powder-horn or two, made for his Majesty's vessel, at about ten and one-half o'clock in the night. Silence was enjoined, and the boats approached the sloop. When within sixty yards the sentinel hailed, "Who comes there?" No answer. Again, "Who comes there?" No answer. A third time, and now from the mouth of the British commander himself, who had mounted the gunwale, "Who comes there? Stand off! You can't come aboard!" Then the voice of Whipple rang out, in stentorian tones, through the stillness of the night, "I am sheriff of Kent county. I have a warrant to arrest you. Surrender, or I'll make you!" "Hand me that musket," said one of the boat's crew to another, and instantly a shot brought the British captain, mortally wounded, down to the deck. By this time the boats were alongside, the brave Rhode Islanders boarded the vessel, hurled their paving-stones, captured the crew, and applying the torch to the vessel, sailed homeward, the bright flames of the burning sloop spreading and mounting aloft in vivid contrast with the blackness of night around them. History has baptized this first naval engagement as "*the Lexington of the Seas*." Sir James Wallace, loyal, as a matter of course, to his Majesty,

George II., and learning who led the assault on the Gaspee, sent, as admiral of his Majesty's fleet, the following note to Captain Whipple:

*"You, Abraham Whipple, on the tenth of June, 1772, burned his Majesty's vessel, the Gaspee, and I will hang you at the yard-arm.*

*"JAMES WALLACE."*

To which Whipple promptly replied, with laconic glee:

*"Sir James Wallace, Sir: Always catch a man before you hang him!"*

*"ABRAHAM WHIPPLE."<sup>1</sup>*

This incident shows the kind of stuff from which Henry Hastings Sibley came, on his maternal great-grandfather's side. The claim of Captain Whipple to the honor of firing the first gun of the Revolution, upon the water, is conceded by all critical historians.<sup>2</sup> His little fleet of eight boats was the "embryo squadron" of the Continental Navy. To what eminence he rose, how great a commander he was, what rare exploits he performed, what amusing stories are told of his tricks at sea; surrendering by dropping under the stern of the enemy to discharge a broadside into the cabin, and then escaping with the wind; chasing a powerful French war-ship by setting up handspikes crowded together along the sides of his vessel, with sailor caps on their heads, running out Quaker-guns, so driving the foe in flight before him; what various and costly prizes he took from England, France, and Spain, and the Barbary States, and what honor he put on the American flag; these, and more of like interest, are narrated in "Hildreth's Lives of the Early Settlers of Ohio."<sup>3</sup> At the close of the war he was the first to unfurl the "Stars and Stripes" on the waters of the Thames in face of the parliament house. After coming to Marietta, Ohio, he built for himself a square-rigged vessel on the Ohio river, which, loaded with flour, he sailed down to the Gulf of Mexico, landing his cargo safe at Havana. He was a great and honored commander, spending his whole fortune in the Revolutionary struggle, enduring all manner of privation, and lavishing his bounty, never repaid, upon the brave men under his care. After a short illness, he

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<sup>1</sup> Hildreth's *Lives of the Early Settlers of Ohio*, p. 129; Arnold's *Hist. of State of Rhode Island*, Vol. II, p. 351; Abbott's *Blue Jackets of 1776*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> "To Captain Abraham Whipple is due the honor of discharging the first gun upon the ocean, at any part of his Majesty's navy in the American Revolution." "The Lexington of the Seas was the affair of June 10, 1772." Arnold's *Hist. St. R. I.*, Vol. II, pp. 312, 351.

<sup>3</sup> Hildreth's *Lives of the Early Settlers of Ohio*, pp. 120-164.

died at Marietta, Ohio, May 29, 1819, aged eighty-five years, where he and his wife lie, side by side, in the beautiful mound-square of that town. On his tombstone is the epitaph written by the Hon. Paul Fearing:

SACRED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
COMMODORE ABRAHAM WHIPPLE,  
WHOSE NAME, SKILL, AND COURAGE  
WILL EVER REMAIN THE PRIDE AND BOAST OF HIS COUNTRY.  
IN THE LATE REVOLUTION HE WAS THE  
FIRST ON THE SEAS TO HURL DEFIANCE AT PROUD BRITAIN, GALLANTLY  
LEADING THE WAY TO WREST FROM THE MISTRESS OF THE OCEAN HER  
SCEPTER, AND THERE TO WAVE THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER.  
HE ALSO CONDUCTED TO SEA THE FIRST  
SQUARE-RIGGED VESSEL EVER BUILT ON THE OHIO,  
OPENING TO COMMERCE  
RESOURCES BEYOND CALCULATION.

Of Colonel Ebenezer Sproat, the maternal grandfather of Henry Hastings Sibley, the record is no less honorable. Unlike Commodore Whipple, who was short and stout, Colonel Sproat was a man of perfect physical proportion and commanding personal presence, being six feet four inches in height. He was born in Middleborough, Massachusetts, 1752, under the reign of King George II., and was the son of Colonel Ebenezer Sproat, a yeoman of large estate, of stately mien, and overshadowing influence. He entered the American Army as captain of a company, rose to the rank of post major in the Tenth Massachusetts, and thence to the colonelcy of one of the four regiments in Glover's brigade at Providence, Rhode Island, being the tallest man in the whole brigade. He was in the battle of Trenton, Monmouth, and Princeton, and so attracted the regards of General Steuben, that he was attached, at once, to his staff as inspector of brigade. He conducted the court-martial that tried and sentenced to death the ringleaders of the mutineers in the New Jersey line, in 1781, a painful military necessity during the Revolutionary War. At the close of the war, he married Catherine Whipple, the daughter of the celebrated commodore. His history, like that of others, is associated with the grandest piece of legislation in the annals of the American Congress. Through the labors of Jay, Adams, and Franklin, effecting a treaty with Great Britain in 1782, the United States acquired an undisputed title to the whole Northwestern Territory, *i. e.* the entire region ceded by Vir-



ginia to the United States, extending from the Ohio river to the lakes, and from Pennsylvania to the Mississippi. After various abortive efforts to provide a government for this domain, an ordinance was reported to Congress, May 9, 1787, which, passed to its second reading on the same day, was ordered to be read the third time the day following. *It never was read*, but was referred to a "new committee" of Southern men, who, after two months, reported the ordinance amended, with a present, absolute, and perpetual prohibition of slavery in the territory, and in all states to be formed therefrom, July 10, 1787. This amended ordinance was read the second time, July 12, 1787, and July 13, 1787, was victoriously and unanimously passed, "every Southern state and every Southern man voting for it." It was the "Great Ordinance of 1787," whereby the whole Northwest Territory was forever consecrated to freedom. The curious problem for the historian has been, why was the ordinance of May 9, 1787, so suddenly arrested, hindered from its third reading; why did two months of ominous silence elapse, under the new committee, and why was the celebrated ordinance of July 13, 1787, so suddenly and unanimously passed? The answer to these questions associates with it the name of Colonel Ebenezer Sproat, and others, who are justly styled in history the real authors of that great instrument for the government of the Northwest, and to whose provisions Henry Hastings Sibley appealed in defense of the rights of the people of Minnesota, when contending in Congress for his seat as a delegate from the residuary Territory of Wisconsin. After the Revolutionary War was over, two hundred and eighty-five veteran Revolutionary officers, stationed at Newburgh, New York, impoverished by the loss of all things for their country's sake, appealed to Congress, in 1783, asking that lands might be assigned them in the Western wilds, as homes for themselves and their children, and be located between the Ohio and the lakes. Of these, one hundred and fifty-five were from Massachusetts, and among them Colonel Ebenezer Sproat. In 1786, the same officers, with others, formed, in Boston, what is known as the "Ohio Company," not for purposes of speculation such as another Ohio company indulged, but for purposes of home settlement, and May 9, 1787, sent to Congress a "*memorial*," offering to buy 1,500,000 acres of the public domain for such purposes, desiring "to organize a colony westward of the Ohio," "to be hereafter admitted as a

state," and asking Congress "to frame a government for them." Washington had suggested the whole plan. The excitement was great. Revolutionary heroes stood at the door of Congress, and, homeless, asked a resting place for themselves and their children. *It was that "memorial" that arrested the third reading of the ordinance of May 9, 1787, and led to the sudden adoption of the "Great Ordinance of July 13, 1787."* The memorialists had suffered all for their country, and were poor. They were heroes, law and order men, loving civil and religious liberty, and staunch defenders of the inalienable rights of mankind. Congress granted the prayer of the brave men, and the ordinance of July 13, 1787, was passed, an ordinance that underlaid the whole subsequent movement of the American nation toward universal freedom, and, to use the words of Bancroft, "shaped the destiny and character of the United States."<sup>1</sup>

In 1786, disliking the mercantile life he had chosen, he abandoned the same, and was appointed by Congress surveyor general of the public Western lands, and in the fall of the same year was made surveyor of lands in Rhode Island. In 1789 he became one of the surveyors of the Ohio company, and in the fall of that year remained at the headwaters of the Ohio building the "Mayflower," so called in memory of the vessel that bore the Pilgrims across the ocean in 1620, the new "Mayflower" designed to convey the "new Pilgrims of the West" to their new colony home in Western wilds. April 7, 1789, Colonel Sproat, with his father-in-law, Commodore Whipple, and their families, and others, among whom were the Putnams, landed at the mouth of the Muskingum river, anchoring there, pioneer settlers, the first to plant the seeds of civilization in the great Northwest. The savages, attracted by the tall, commanding figure, large eye, and splendid presence of Colonel Sproat, called him "Hetuck," or the "Big Buckeye," a *sobriquet* ever since applied to the natives of Ohio. After the organization of Washington county, he was sheriff during fourteen years, until the formation of the state government, and in 1790 was appointed superintendent of military affairs by General Knox, secretary of war. As sheriff, he opened the first county court ever held in Ohio, march-

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<sup>1</sup> Bancroft's Hist. of the Constitution, Vol. II, pp. 104, 106; Pitkin's Polit. and Civil Hist., Vol. II, p. 148; Address by Israel Ward Andrews, LL.D., ex-President Marietta College, Ohio, Job Printing House, Salem, Massachusetts, 1887.



ing, September 2, 1788, with drawn sword and wand of office, in front of the judges, governor, and secretary, and preceded by a military escort in Continental dress, his majesty of person and demeanor making a decided impression on the Indians, who regarded him as some divinity dropped down among them. He officiated as paymaster to the Ohio Rangers, and as colonel of the territorial troops, during five years. Genial, jovial, cheerful, generous, benevolent, fond of repartee, yet dignified, a lover of field sports, affectionate to horses and dogs, and ever a friend of the poor, poor himself, he won the esteem and affections of all classes, and was "looked up to" by all, as he "towered like a Saul, full head above the height of other men."<sup>1</sup> He was a Federalist in politics, and the intimate and devoted friend of General George Washington. He died, suddenly, in Marietta, in 1805, amid universal lamentation, his memory held in the tenderest regard by the whole country.

It remains to speak of Sarah Whipple Sproat, the mother of Henry Hastings Sibley. It is a saying, not without merit, that

"All true trophies of the ages  
Are from mother-love impearled,  
For the hand that rocks the cradle  
Is the hand that rules the world."

The readers of history have not forgotten Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi, nor Letitia the mother of Napoleon, nor Menica the mother of Augustine. The mother of Henry Hastings Sibley has no less a right to be had in remembrance. Sarah Whipple Sproat was the only daughter of Colonel Ebenezer Sproat, and granddaughter of Commodore Abraham Whipple. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, January 28, 1782, she was, in her childhood, one of the pioneers of Western civilization, landing with her parents and grandparents in the "Mayflower," at the mouth of the Muskingum river, Ohio, when seven years old, the year when General Washington was chosen the first president of the United States, under the Federal Constitution. Her tender feet were first planted upon an unexplored wilderness, inhabited by savages alone. Owing to the difficulty of transportation, her parents, and those who accompanied them, could only bring with them the absolute necessities of life. Their homes were log cabins of the rudest sort,

<sup>1</sup> Hildreth's Lives, etc., pp. 230-240.

plastered with mud, without doors save the blankets the pioneers had brought with them, no windows except the unwainscoted openings at the sides of the cabins, no furniture other than the trunks and rough boxes which served them for seats, their all-sufficing comforts the consciousness of the sacrifice of all things for their country, the providence of God, the confidence they had in each other, the mutual love of husband and wife, parents and children, and the hope of better times for their offspring in days to come. The situation was lonely indeed.

"No house, nor hut, nor fruitful field,  
Nor bleating flock, nor lowing herd,  
No garden that might pleasure yield,  
Nor cheerful, early crowing bird.

"No friends to help in time of need,  
Nor healing medicine to restore,  
None near to mourn with them their dead,  
Alone, in danger, humble, poor."

The kinship of a common suffering and sympathy, however, knit together the souls of these brave pioneers, as the heart of one man, strengthening them to undergo, with fortitude, the hardships and privations to which he, who rules the destinies of men and determines the bounds and habitations that they cannot pass, had called them. Among such scenes the early childhood of Sarah Whipple Sproat was nurtured. The idol of her father, and an Indian war approaching, he resolved to move her from the midst of danger, and placed her, in her tenth year, in the Moravian school at Bethlehem, near Philadelphia, an institution in high repute, not less for its religious care than for its educational appointments. Although a tender child, yet, accompanied by her father, she undertook her formidable journey, traveling on horseback the entire distance of near seven hundred miles, crossing the Alleghanies, then almost untrod, and camping in the open air at night. At the end of three years she went to Philadelphia to secure advantages in culture not accessible in Bethlehem, and, returning in her sixteenth year, to Marietta, accompanied again by her father, brought with her the first piano that ever came west of the Alleghany mountains. A great change had occurred during her absence. The colony had assumed a new appearance. New settlers had enlarged its numbers. Marietta was no more a lonely place.

A sense of security pervaded the atmosphere, and amid the enjoyment of many friends and a pleasing society of persons of like age with herself, she learned that even a wilderness might provide the blessing of a happy home.

Within five years next ensuing her return she was married, October, 1802, in her twentieth year, to Solomon Sibley, Esq., a young lawyer of high standing, not only socially, but also at the bar, who, having completed his collegiate education and studied law with William Hastings, Esq., an eminent attorney in Boston, removed from Sutton, Massachusetts, to Ohio, in 1797, the year of her return. The following spring the young couple took leave of Marietta, to make their home in Detroit, and journeying, first by the river to Pittsburgh, thence by land to Erie, and thence by water to Detroit, reached their destination, finding a warm welcome from a circle of congenial friends, among whom were several Southern officers in charge of the fort and many descendants of noble French families of culture and refinement, the first founders of the beautiful "City of the Straits." During the winter of 1804 Mrs. Sibley remained with her father at Marietta, cheering his last days with her presence, her husband's business requiring him to be absent in Washington. As in her childhood, so still, the miniature portrait of her father, painted by the celebrated Kosciusko, her father's warm personal friend and companion during the war, hung upon the wall, and the recital of memories of the past served to enliven the winter evenings as they passed away. The destruction of Detroit by fire, in the spring of 1805, compelled Mr. Sibley to renew a long dilapidated dwelling on the square opposite what then was known as the "Biddle House," which being put in comfortable order, and nicely furnished, he went to Marietta, and returning with Mrs. Sibley, they occupied the house from 1805 to 1835, their home for thirty years. In this house Henry Hastings Sibley was born, February 20, 1811.

What Detroit suffered from the British during the War of 1812 is known to every reader of American history, and how disgraceful was the surrender of the fort by General Hull to General Brock, the British commander, all well-informed persons are aware. When the attack was made upon the city the women and children were all placed in the fort for safety. Mrs. Sibley, then the mother of three children, was found, holding in her arms her youngest child, Henry Hastings,

scarce more than a year old, while, with her busy hands, she was making cartridges for soldiers, or scraping lint for the wounded, during the entire cannonade. Four officers, in a room adjoining, were killed by a cannon ball, one of this number her cousin, her husband in the field commanding a company of militia during the assault. Her conduct was sublime, and her courage, like that of other noble women with her, was deserving of the highest praise. Amid the discharging of guns and flying of splintered logs and breaking of stones around her, she continued with infinite coolness her patriotic work, until the surrender of the fort was commenced, when, indignant at the cowardly conduct of General Hull, the women all declared themselves ready to be sacrificed but not to be disgraced. It belongs to history to say that, when Henry Hastings Sibley was scarce over a year old, he was a prisoner of war, basely surrendered into the hands of a British general, while his mother was ministering all in her power to hold the fort, and his father was exposing his life in the field. After the surrender Mr. and Mrs. Sibley made two visits to Ohio, the second being the last, in 1819. Upon the death of both her grandparents, Mrs. Sibley's widowed mother, Mrs. Sproat, accompanied her daughter and her husband returning to Detroit, where she made her last earthly home, her death occurring in the year 1832.

Mrs. Sibley was now fifty years old, the mother of nine children. Father, grandfather, and grandmother gone, her childhood's home forsaken forever, the brevity of life's thread and the solemnity of life's duties which always impressed her, and shaped her children's religious instruction,—even as her own Moravian training had left its impress upon her,—seemed now more than ever to call her to deeper and more intense devotion. Her husband's honors were thick upon him. He sat, moreover, as chief justice on the territorial bench of Michigan, and Time had swiftly made of her infant Henry a stalwart youth, who already had gone from his native roof to seek his fortunes in a wide wilderness where the white man's home was only a hunting camp or a trading post. Faithful to all her duties, as a daughter, wife, and mother, in the midst of frontier dangers and hardships, her life had been one long-drawn struggle, helping to found a state, fashion the rising generation, fix in the minds of her children respect for truth, the love of virtue, the fear of God, and a high ambition for

noble ends. She felt that soon the autumn of life was coming, and sere and yellow leaves would spread near her door, and Death invite her to enter the narrow house and yield to the long sleep appointed for all living. Therefore did she seek, all the more earnestly, by acts of home devotion and public charity, to complete her ministry of kindness in all her circles of wide and varied influence among the numerous friends by whom she was surrounded. To the memory of this noble woman, Mrs. Ellett, in her admirable volume on "The Pioneer Women of the West," has assigned a place of eminent and comely honor. On none of the twenty-five whose virtues she celebrates, has she lavished a more beautiful, chaste, or touching tribute to womanly worth. Speaking of Mrs. Sibley, she says, "The duties incumbent upon her as a wife and mother she faithfully performed. A large family grew up around her, in whose minds it ever was her constant endeavor to instil such high principles as should make them true to themselves and useful members of society. To her, most truly, could the scriptural passage be applied, '*Her children shall rise up and call her blessed.*'" And once more: "Of all women, there was not one better fitted by nature and education for the time and place than this noble woman. Blessed with a commanding person, a vigorous and cultivated intellect, undaunted courage, and an intuitive clear perception of right and wrong, she exercised great influence upon the society in which she lived. Affectionate in disposition, frank in manner, and truly just as well as benevolent, she was, during her whole married life, the centre of an admiring circle of devoted friends. As age crept on, and disease confined her to the fireside, she still remained the object of profound and marked respect to the people of the city which had grown around her, and when, at length, she was 'gathered to her fathers,' she died, as she had always lived, without one to cast a reproach upon her elevated and beautiful character."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pioneer Women of the West, p. 223.

## CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE AND CAREER OF HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY.—TRAITS.—EDUCATION.—REJECTS THE LAW AS A PROFESSION.—LEAVES HOME.—CLERK AT SAULT STE. MARIE.—ENTERS THE SERVICE OF THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.—MACKINAC.—TRIP TO CHICAGO.—CHICAGO IN 1829.—TRIP TO DETROIT IN 1832.—PERILOUS VOYAGE AND PICTURESQUE ENTRANCE INTO THE CITY.—CHOLERA.—DEATH.—SUPPLY PURCHASING AGENT FOR THE COMPANY, 1832-1834.—JUSTICE OF THE PEACE IN HIS TEENS.—BECOMES PARTNER IN THE COMPANY, 1834.—CHIEF INSPECTOR OF THE TRADING POSTS IN THE FAR NORTHWEST.—LANDS AT ST. PETERS, AT THE MOUTH OF THE MINNESOTA RIVER, NOVEMBER, 1834.—EMOTIONS AND SENSATIONS.—FORT SNELLING.—THE HAMLET.—INDIANS.—BUSINESS.—SEVERE WINTER.—EMPLOYMENT.—THE SPLENDID GANDER-SHOT.—SIGN LANGUAGE.—ERECTS STONE BUILDINGS.—BUYS OUT THE INTEREST OF BAILLY.—BACHELOR'S LIFE.—THE OFFERED SQUAW.—HIS LIBRARY.—LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS.—RELIGIOUS CHARACTER, VIEWS, AND RELATIONS.—INDIAN BANDS AND DIVISIONS DESCRIBED.—VIRTUES OF THE INDIANS.—THEIR RELIGION.—CHARACTER OF THE INDIAN TRADERS AND VOYAGEURS.—CHARACTER OF THE EARLY PIONEERS AND SETTLERS OF MINNESOTA.—ROMANTIC INCIDENTS IN MR. SIBLEY'S INDIAN LIFE.—HUNTING.—ORGANIZATION OF A HUNTING CAMP AND EXPEDITION.—ADVENTURES.—MODE OF HUNTING.—SIBLEY IN INDIAN COSTUME.—A SABBATH-KEEPER.—HIS NOMS DE PLUME, "HAL A DAKOTAH," AND "WALKER-IN-THE-PINES."—ELK SHOOTING.—ENCOUNTER WITH A BUFFALO.—PROTECTS AND DELIVERS AN ASSAULTED CAMP.—SAVES THE WAHPETONS FROM DEATH BY COLD AND STARVATION.—JUSTICE OF THE PEACE OVER A TERRITORY LARGE AS THE EMPIRE OF FRANCE.—HIS MARRIAGE TO MISS SARAH JANE STEELE.—HER ANCESTRY.—HER THREE SISTERS, MARY H. STEELE, MRS. DR. POTTS, MRS. GENERAL JOHNSON.—THE MANSION AT MENDOTA.—MR. SIBLEY ERECTS A CHURCH EDIFICE AT HIS OWN EXPENSE.—HOSPITALITY.—DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

SOME ONE in the line of an ancestry so remarkable as that described in the previous pages, could scarcely fail to enact a rôle in large measure corresponding to the inborn tendencies due to such a descent. Biological science predicts with certainty, under its laws of heredity and environment, the future outgrowth, in personal form, of the varied forces, intellectual, moral, social, and civil, whose combined action has produced a record of distinction in the past. The impulses of past generations throb, somewhere, in the life of generations to come. The double stream of pioneer blood, from both father's and

mother's side, mingling its current and coursing its way through all the convulsions of English history and Anglo-Saxon civilization down to the Pilgrim times and thence pulsating through all the phases of American, Colonial, Revolutionary, and national progress, rushed, with all its native qualities, into the veins of Henry Hastings Sibley. The scion of a stock whose roots ran back almost to the Norman Conquest, was, by hereditary right and impulse, a born van-courier of civilization, impossible to be restrained to the dull routine of monotonous life, or tied to a social condition where scenes of adventure and danger were wanting. His inclination and disposition, from his earliest boyhood; his aptitudes, tastes, and daring; the high possibilities wrapped in his natural constitution, all foretokened a brilliant future and flowered at length to a development of active and varied career such as wove new laurels with which to add renown to the family name. He was what he was by a predetermined force, through which his free personality worked, planting in the soil of Minnesota a tree of blessing the fruit of which will be gathered by all coming generations.

His earliest boyhood was soon distinguished by traits of character that made him conspicuous. He surpassed his fellows in all manner of mischief, from morning till night, transcending their utmost capacity to do what came to him as a thing most natural and easy, and affording infinite pleasure. To use his own words, recording some memories of his early days, "So many were my exploits in that direction that my dear mother often declared me incorrigible and the black sheep of the family." Educated in the academy at Detroit, which in those days was equal to a high school education to-day, and this supplemented by two years' study of the Greek and Latin languages, under the Rev. H. Cadle, an Episcopal clergyman and fine scholar, and still further by two years more of study in the law, being designed for the legal profession, Henry at last broke through the whole plan devised by his parents, and frankly confessed to his father that the study of the law was to him an irksome task, and that he longed for a more active, outdoor, and stirring life. With commendable wisdom, his parents, after much consultation, consented to leave their son to pursue the bent of his inclination, and choose for himself his own career. Cutting loose from his home, in his eighteenth year, June 20, 1828, he wended his way, northward



and westward, never again to return except as a transient visitor. His *debut* in business life was as a clerk in the employ of Mr. John Hulbert of Sault Ste. Marie, whose sutler's store, at that point of connection between Lakes Superior and Huron, was supply source for four companies of the Fifth regiment of United States Infantry there garrisoned. His second step, after a few months' service here, was the acceptance of an agency for the conduct of the affairs of a Mrs. Johnson, widow, and mother-in-law of the celebrated Henry L. Schoolcraft, who was United States Indian Agent near the Sault, and whose literary and scientific labors are well known to the world. This new employment familiarized young Sibley with Indian affairs, inasmuch as the husband of Mrs. Johnson had himself been an Indian trader for years, and of large business, his widow continuing the same after his death. The third step in young Sibley's opening career was his acceptance of a clerkship, in the spring of 1829, in the great "American Fur Company," of which John Jacob Astor of New York was the head, and whose great *entrepot* for all manner of furs and pelts, collected from the regions washed by Lakes Huron and Michigan, and from the Mississippi valley above Prairie du Chien, and from the territory watered by the tributaries to that stream, was at Mackinac. Bidding adieu to his friends, and to the esteemed lady whose affairs he had faithfully managed, and to her three amiable daughters, whose society beguiled the loneliness of his evening hours, and, in some measure, compensated for the loss of home, young Sibley, with a half-dozen adventurous youths, embarked for Mackinac, in a small schooner, poorly supplied, descending the river St. Mary, and encountering, in Lake George, a large field of ice, in the middle of which, to the infinite disgust and annoyance of all, the frail craft was wedged and imbedded for no less than eight days. The marine larder soon exhausted, the gay youths were compelled, in order to escape absolute starvation, to make for the shore and shoot rabbits, a providential abundance being near. "This," says Mr. Sibley, in his notes of those times, "was my first venture in the hardships and exposures incident to the wild life upon which I had entered, and it was luxury compared with the privations I was compelled to endure many long years thereafter."

The goal of the expedition was, however, finally reached, and the young adventurers landed at Mackinac, where stood



the central depot of the American Fur Company, second only to that of the Hudson Bay Company, in extent of capital, number of traders, clerks, *voyageurs*, and business. Arrived at his post, young Sibley immediately reported to Mr. Robert Stuart, a gentleman of noble character, and impressive personal bearing, and who subsequently became the leading elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Detroit, a man who was not only the trusted agent of John Jacob Astor, but in fact the owner, and embodiment of, the American Fur Company itself. Cordially received, and informed that the business season would not open till June, and that the time intervening was at the disposal of Mr. Sibley, to do with it as he pleased, Mr. Sibley accepted the invitation of an old friend, John Kinzie, whose father had been an Indian agent stationed at Chicago, and both started for that "Queen City of the Lakes." It was a spectacle then, as it is now, but how different in 1829 from what it is in 1889! An uneventful voyage on a sail vessel named Napoleon soon brought the two companions to their destination. "I found," says Mr. Sibley, "on the present site of the Queen City of the Lakes, a stockade constructed for defense against the Indians, but abandoned, and perhaps half a dozen dwellings occupied by the Beaubien and other families, and a single store stocked with a small but varied assortment of goods and provisions. A more uninviting place could hardly be conceived of. Sand, here, there, everywhere, with an occasional shrub to relieve the monotony of the landscape. Little did I dream that I would live to see on that desolate coast a magnificent city of more than a half million of inhabitants, almost rivaling metropolitan New York in wealth and splendor."<sup>1</sup>

The Napoleon returned to Mackinac May 22, 1829, bearing backward Mr. Sibley to his post, when, entering at once upon his duties, and finding a pleasant home in the charming family of Mr. Stuart, he soon discovered, notwithstanding much to make life agreeable, that a clerkship in the American Fur Company was no sinecure, for at least three busy months in the year, in which from twelve to fourteen hours of close confinement and writing were exacted every day by the necessities of trade. The winter, however, was a season of comparative rest, affording opportunity for study, social enjoyment, fishing, and various amusements. In 1832 Mr. Sibley

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Autobiography, by H. H. Sibley, p. 19.

was selected by Mr. Stuart, and dispatched, to transact important business for the company, with Hon. George B. Porter, governor, and *ex-officio* superintendent of Indian affairs for the Territory of Michigan, headquarters at Detroit. A splendid bark canoe, with a crew of nine chosen *voyageurs*, and six days' rations (consumed in four), was the outfit. A severe storm upon Saginaw bay had nearly wrecked the whole enterprise but for the superiority of the boat, and the men who succeeded in doubling, without accident, Point aux Barques, yet, when distant a mile from shore, night already upon them, and borne along by the swell of the billow, suddenly settled upon the top of a sharp rock, tearing a large hole through the frail bark in the middle of the canoe. The danger was great. Instantly thrusting his large overcoat into the hole, Mr. Sibley ordered the men to paddle for shore with the utmost expedition. By good fortune, a sand beach was detected on the iron-bound coast, where, landing none too soon, the water was emptied from the canoe, which was borne on the shoulders of the men to a convenient distance, to await repairs. For two days the storm continued, provisions exhausted, with only the gum and bark of trees on which to subsist. The canoe repaired, the alternatives demanded his immediate choice; either to stay and starve to death, or dare once more the treacherous sea, paddling for dear life, no place for food or supplies nearer than distant one hundred miles. The die was cast. At the order of Mr. Sibley, the brave-hearted *voyageurs* launched the canoe, and, amid the breaking of waves, all sprang to their seats, plying their paddles with the utmost exertion. A sail soon improvised, and the paddles used as a centre-board, all hands devoted to the task of preventing leeway, the canoe, like a lion leaping the plain, bounded over the billows, and before sunset had accomplished the flight of eighty miles. Landing at a small habitation twelve miles from the lower end of Lake Huron, Mr. Sibley was informed that the Asiatic cholera was raging, hundreds were dying, the shores lined with the dead, the water unfit to be used, and was advised to retrace his way to Mackinac with all haste. He declined to abandon the duty he was intrusted to discharge, or take counsel of fear. Securing only six pounds of flour, which was mixed with water, and with one and a half pounds of pork for the whole company of ten men, paying roundly for the same, the scant supply was soon cooked and

devoured. The journey resumed, Fort Gratiot was reached the same day, where, in passing, Mr. Sibley learned from the sentinel that Detroit was scourged by cholera, and deaths occurring at nearly every point on the river St. Clair. Hearing, however, that no cases had been reported at Ward's Landing, twenty-five miles below, he pushed for that point, reaching the same at midnight, and with difficulty secured provision for his men. More than sixty miles remained to be traversed. Next morning, mindful of the danger before him, yet mindful also of the lives of others, he proposed to his men, himself to proceed on horseback, at once, to Detroit, leaving them where they still were, in view of the fact that, while he himself was single, the rest were married and men of families dependent upon them for their living and care. He counseled them not to expose themselves, but await his return, which he hoped to accomplish in a few days. The kind-hearted men refused to accede to the proposal so noble, and declared themselves ready to run any risks and share any dangers to which their leader might be exposed. The party resumed their journey, landing at night at Grand Marais, where, fighting mosquitoes the whole night, they prepared next morning to enter Detroit, seven miles distant. The grand entrance of the *voyageurs*, commanded by Mr. Sibley, into the city of Detroit is too graphically described by his own pen to allow it, for a moment, to be varied by the pen of another. Speaking of this entrance, he says:

"Early in the morning, the *voyageurs* prepared for a grand entry into the city, by arraying themselves in their best apparel. They donned high-crowned hats of the same material, with abundance of tinsel cords and black plumes, calico shirts of bright tints exactly alike, and broad worsted belts around their waists. Being all fine, athletic fellows, they made quite a striking appearance. The canoe had been gaily painted, and, on this occasion, two large black plumes, and two of bright red of like dimensions, adorned the bow and stern of the craft, respectively. All things in readiness, we took our several stations, and in a few moments, under the impetus of nine paddles, wielded by muscular arms, and the inspiration of a Canadian boat-song, in the chorus of which all joined, we shot down the current of the great river of the straits at almost half-railroad speed. The appearance of a bark canoe of the largest size, with its paraphernalia, manned by a strong crew of hardy *voyageurs*, keeping time with their paddles to the not unmelodious notes of a French boat-song, was so unusual and attractive that the wharves were crowded with people to witness our progress past the city."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Autobiography, p. 27:

Reporting at quarantine, Mr. Sibley learned of the decease and burial of his grandmother, who fell a victim to the fatal epidemic, the one who, though much loved, yet, of all the family, could best be spared. Returning from quarantine, and running up stream a mile or more, a vacant house on the river bank, owned by an Indian trader, Campeau, became the headquarters of the *voyageurs* during their stay in Detroit, supplied abundantly with all things necessary, intoxicating liquors being strictly prohibited. Revisiting the house which had been the place of his birth, Mr. Sibley spent one night in the old home, and, having afterward transacted successfully, with Governor Porter, the business for which he had taken his long and dangerous journey, and securing important licenses for the Fur company, returned with his gallant crew to Mackinac, gave account of his mission to Robert Stuart, and entered upon his active duties as clerk of the company.

During five years Mr. Sibley remained in the employ of the Fur company as its clerk. In 1832-1833, 1833-1834, he was charged with the responsible duty of supply purchasing agent for the whole company, providing not only the food but all other articles needed for the conduct and operations of the company during the current year. The company's confidence in him was unbounded. Letters of credit, *carte-blanche*, were given him upon New York. His headquarters were at Cleveland, Ohio. A trust so important, assigned to one so young and inexperienced, argued a great capacity and a reliance not less marked. On horseback, the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania, in great part, were scoured, during the coldest season of the year, and no contract was closed before the best possibilities of the market and the field had been canvassed. During his stay in Mackinac he was appointed justice of the peace for the county of Mackinac, by Governor Porter of Michigan, a commission received before he was of age; another mark of that increasing regard which was ever opening his way to heavier and higher responsibilities in regions more distant, in years to come.

The fourth step in young Sibley's career—the one that decided the tenor of his whole subsequent life—was, when, in 1834, he became a partner in the Fur company, which resulted in his being placed at the head of all its affairs in the far Northwest, and in his advent as a young man to the wilds of Minnesota. In 1834 John Jacob Astor sold out his interest

in the Northwest to a new corporation in New York City, without change of name, and of which Ramsey Crooks, father of Colonel William Crooks of St. Paul, and for a long time one of Mr. Astor's trusted agents, was chosen president. The reorganization of the company was decreed, young Sibley having one year yet remaining by virtue of his contract with the Astor company, and therefore could not be legally transferred to the new company without his consent. Held in esteem by the incoming president, he frankly avowed to him the dissatisfaction of his parents with his present position, which, to them, seemed inferior to what their son deserved, and made known the fact that the offer of cashier in two banks, one in Detroit, the other in Huron, with liberal salary, had already been extended. He further stated that while he recognized the right of the old company to insist on his year's service, he could not concede such right to the new; yet, from respect to the incoming president, an old friend of his father, he would offer to pay to the new corporation \$1,000 as a consideration for its voluntary release of him from his existing engagement. The proposition was rejected. In terms the most flattering, Colonel Crooks replied that the services of Mr. Sibley, young as he was, were indispensable to the best interests of the company, referred to the signal success of his efforts already, and, as a counter proposition, offered to him the chieftainship of the entire interests of the Fur company in the far Northwest, guaranteeing terms satisfactory to himself and his parents. It happened that, just at that time, two eminent Indian traders, Hercules L. Dousman and Joseph Rolette, Sr., friends of young Sibley, devised a project of their own, seconding, with ardor, at the same time, the offer of Colonel Crooks. Their project was no less than that of forming a copartnership consisting of the new American Fur Company, Dousman, Rolette, and Sibley, the former to furnish the capital, Dousman to conduct the fur trade on the old ground previously under charge of himself and Rolette, headquarters at Prairie du Chien, Rolette, on account of age, to be a nominal partner, and Sibley, stalwart and vigorous, to push out into the wilderness and take exclusive control of the trade with numerous bands of Sioux Indians from Lake Pepin to the British line, and to the headwaters of the Missouri. Dousman depicted the future in glowing colors, and, well aware how addicted to field sports and outdoor adventure; how full

of desire for hunting, shooting, fishing, and roaming young Sibley was, expounded Genesis to its utmost capacity, dilating upon "the beast of the field," "the fowl of the air," "the fish of the sea," "the herb-yielding seed," "every creeping thing," "the grass of the earth," and the "lights" of heaven, by day and by night, in a firmament clear as glass;—Nature in all her wildness, beauty, and charm, and furs in all their teeming abundance;—breathing flowers and sparkling waterfalls;—the chase and the wigwam, and El Dorados of certain possession;—until Sibley's mind, intoxicated by the description, wavered, reeled, surrendered, and, rejecting the offer of cash-ier in a bank, accepted the new proposal, and prepared to advance into the native wilds of the far Northwest. He was then in his twenty-third year. The junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, St. Peters, now Mendota (M'dota, meeting of the waters), was selected as the headquarters of Mr. Sibley,—the whole region an absolute wild save where the flag floated at Fort Snelling, and the rude huts of some traders appeared. A thousand miles more were to be put between him and his paternal home.

Leaving Mackinac October 25, 1834, and journeying by way of Green bay, Fox river, the portage of the Wisconsin, and availing himself of the aid of a small rickety stern-wheel steamer, he reached Prairie du Chien on the fifth day after he started, and was warmly welcomed by his partner, Colonel Dousman. Remaining a few days, he then began the formidable journey of three hundred miles on horseback, through an unexplored and uninhabited wilderness. He was his own commissariat. Falling in with Alexis Bailly, whose destination was the same as his own, and each attended by a Canadian *voyageur*, a young half-breed accompanying, the five proceeded along their way. Compelled to swim their horses across the Mississippi by the side of a wooden dugout, each horse with a rope round his neck, the end held by the rider, the animal on which Mr. Sibley had ridden suddenly became intractable. The moment his feet touched the bottom of the stream he commenced plunging and the dugout began capsizing, until passengers, baggage, and clothing, were together emptied into the deep water, out of which, however, after serious effort, the party delivered themselves, drenched and shivering, to spend the cool autumn day in drying their apparel, securing their horses and effects, and expressing grateful thanks to divine Providence that things were no worse.



Traveling industriously during the day, and camping at night in the open air, with nothing to guide their course in the trackless waste save the knowledge that the Mississippi river ran north and south, the adventurers in two days reached the banks of that stream, and in three days more, November 7, 1834, arrived at St. Peters, twelve days having passed since Mr. Sibley had bidden farewell to his friends at Mackinac. The only habitation of a white man between Prairie du Chien and St. Peters, three hundred miles apart, was that of an Indian trader named Rocque, near the present town of Wabasha, whose hospitality ministered to the belated travelers a night's shelter from a pitiless storm, a generous feast on fresh venison and wild honey, comfortable beds on which to rest, and, in the morning, after an ample meal, a word of good cheer as the party started away.

The impression made upon Mr. Sibley, when his eyes first looked on the scenes in the midst of which his home was to be, long years, and really for life, is best told in his own words:

"When I reached the brink of the hill overlooking the surrounding country, I was struck with the picturesque beauty of the scene. From that outlook, the course of the Mississippi river from the north was seen suddenly turning eastward, to where St. Paul now stands,—the Minnesota river from the west, the principal tributary of the main stream,—and at the junction of the two was the military post of Fort Snelling, perched on a high and commanding point, with its stone walls and blockhouses, bidding defiance to any attempt at capture by the poorly-armed savages, should such be made. There was also visible a wide expanse of prairie in the rear of the fort. But when I descended into the amphitheatre, where the hamlet was situated, I was disappointed to find only a group of log huts, the most pretentious of which was the home of my fellow traveler, Mr. Bailly, in whose family I became an inmate for the next six months."<sup>1</sup>

This hamlet, where now couches the little town of Mendota, at the foot of the hills that overlook Fort Snelling, a mile distant, became the abiding-place of Mr. Sibley for years, and under his active management, and that of others associated with him, grew to a post of great importance, and flourished as the *entrepot* of the fur trade for an immense region of country. Lonely enough was the new home. There were no Indian lodges, or tepees, at St. Peters, and but a few at Kaposia below and at different places on the Minnesota river above, the nearest of which was Black Dog, three miles away. The only relief to the solitude was Fort Snelling,

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Autobiography, p. 41.

where the first white settlement was made in 1819, a few small groups of people, in 1837, three years following Mr. Sibley's arrival, having been gathered at Stillwater, St. Paul, and St. Anthony. Not till 1848 was there a goodly number on the west side of the St. Croix. Nevertheless, four companies of the Fifth regiment, United States Infantry, commanded by Major Joseph Plympton, garrisoned the fort, and the families of the officers, some of whom were gentlemen of education and refinement, and the ladies of the garrison, afforded to Mr. Sibley a very pleasant society, all the more that he had been furnished with letters of introduction to the officers, especially to Major Lawrence Taliaferro, the Indian agent, who, with his employes, occupied two stone buildings outside the walls of the fort. Such was the habitat of young Sibley, and such his environment, a wide wilderness infested with savages, yet beautiful with many scenes of native charm, a desert, save where the log hut of the trader stood, and the massive walls of the fort invited the defenseless to find a refuge; a place distant three hundred miles from any white settlement, "the one spot where the missionary of the cross, the man of science, and the adventurous trader made preparation for their journeys among the villages of the wandering Dakotas."<sup>1</sup> This was seventeen years before any of the great treaties negotiated at St. Peters (Mendota) and Traverse des Sioux had extinguished the Indian title to the immense area now known as Minnesota, and part of Dakota besides.

The winter of 1834-1835 was one peculiarly severe and protracted. But little business was done during those cheerless days, the evenings being spent either in reading or social visitation at the fort, whiling away the hour either at the chess-board or some other amusement or in general conversation. The spring following, late of arrival, and the winter diet of salt pork palling on the taste, a piece of fresh meat rarely seen, and the family of Mr. Bailly always made happy by the advent of a goose, even if only occasional, yet marking a glee-some day in the hamlet calendar, it occurred to Mr. Sibley, one fine morning, to shoulder his trusty rifle, and, with Mr. Bailly, wend his way along the banks of the Minnesota, simply "for the sake of exercise and observation," yet ready to confront whatever dangers might oppose their path. In a few moments, the well-known yet curious "honk" of a gander

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 420.



coming through the air, saluted the ear, and the presence of a flock of five wild geese greeted the vision of the strollers. The delightful recollections of the last goose that adorned the *menu* in the hamlet rose with vivid brilliancy upon the mind, and, instantly concealing themselves in the bushes on the shore of a lake between the river and the bluff, Mr. Sibley, naturally musical, tuned his instrument and began to play the "Oratorio of the Gander," and imitate the "honk" with such success, the nasal chords and epiglottis being well in order, that the whole flock, after detouring over Snelling, returned, circling, and alighted on the ice in the centre of the lake, distant at least two hundred and fifty yards from where the young musician was in ambush. Recounting the scene and the event, with just pride, as an evidence, not only of his musical proficiency in early life, but of his splendor as the "*finest shot in the country*," he says: "I remarked, *sotto voce*, to my companion, that the distance was too great to insure a certain shot, but as there was no way of nearer approach without alarming the keen-eyed birds, I would do the best I could in the premises. I took a careful aim at the *head* of the leader, a huge gander, believing that the ball would be depressed in traversing so long a line of sight, and might probably strike the *body* of the fowl. What was our delight when, with the crack of the rifle, the bird fell with a heavy thud upon the frozen surface, and the rest of the flock took refuge in flight. We tried to beguile them with plaintive goose appeals, but without effect. They could not be persuaded to come back, even to ascertain the fate of their unfortunate comrade whose head had just been severed from his body."<sup>1</sup> The circumstance is worth narrating. No sportsman, no Indian in all the region, could excel Mr. Sibley in the use of the rifle. The gander having been shot, the question now was how to secure the prize and bring the game ashore. Here again Mr. Sibley showed his pre-eminence in acrobatic and aquatic qualities, and supported the fame of his daring and versatile ancestry. The thawing ice would bear a gander's weight, but not the footstep of a Sibley. And yet the bird must not be lost, nor must the table be disappointed of its due. Snatching a pine board lying near the shore, Mr. Sibley started, in the face of his companion's protest, and made for the victim of his rifle, using the board as necessity required.

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Autobiography, p. 45.

Once and again, a third time, and a fourth, the ice broke in, but the traveler still plowed his way, like a steam-dredge breaking ice, eyes fastened on the gander, hands clinging to the plank, feet working with all energy, and body persevering to the goal. "I broke through," writes the hero of this adventure, "several times, but persevered, and after a long and fatiguing experience, I brought the game triumphantly to the dry land, at the cost of a complete immersion in the cold water." It is needless to say that the Heaven-sent biped was quickly attended to by the family of Mr. Bailly, who, compassionating its distress, removed its clothing, introduced it to the fire and arrayed it in its glory, smoking, on the table, when—Mr. Sibley having given thanks—the disappearance of the fowl began amid the general jubilee of a much delighted and most grateful family.

Other hunting incidents not less amusing, and which filled up the space before the working time commenced, are preserved, and several are publicly recorded. As the season advanced, and the lakes near Mendota were visited by ducks and geese, the young sportsman indulged his favorite desire. On one occasion, a Sioux Indian in the distance and Mr. Sibley both discharged their guns at the same flock of ducks, almost simultaneously, the Indian having only one barrel, Mr. Sibley having two, out of which the shot flew thick among the birds. With cool impudence, the Indian stepped to where eight fowls had fallen, and, one by one, laced the whole number, dangling, to his body, having thrust the head of each beneath his belt. Loading his gun, Mr. Sibley then coolly walked over to where the Indian stood, and with infinite self-possession, and the air of immemorial right, unlaced, at his leisure, the entire number from the Indian's belt, attaching them, head by head, securely to his own, the Indian staring and mute with astonishment. Like "Scotch Geordy," who, desirous of teaching theology, yet unable to use the vocal organs, held up three fingers to denote that there are "three persons in the Godhead," then clubbed his fist to prove that these "three are one," so Mr. Sibley, duck-girded, and wishing to preach a discourse on morals, yet powerless to speak the Sioux tongue, resorted to genuine Dakota sign language, in order to communicate his ideas and reveal his emotions. "I held up," he says, "*two* fingers, denoting that, if he had been satisfied with *two* ducks, I would not have objected,

but as he was so gluttonous as to appropriate the whole number, *he should have none!*"<sup>1</sup> It may be imagined that the Indian understood, by two fingers uplifted, two possible ducks, but, as no actual fowl of that number were offered, it is hard to conceive how Dakota logic could have dreamed of *ducks at all!* By what process of ratiocination untutored "Lo," who "sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind," could see ducks in the digitals of Mr. Sibley, or pass from the outstanding major and minor premises to the conclusion "*shan't have any,*" or how  $2=0$ , is really an entertainment for Oedipus! More likely, the Indian, abashed by the shaking menace before him, began to think that Sibley meant to say, "You unconverted heathen, you! You have done this business *once!* shooting my ducks I came all the way from Mackinac to find, and even stealing them, here in my presence! If you do it *twice,* I'll discharge *both* barrels at your head!" At any rate, this was the first lesson in ethics it was Mr. Sibley's privilege to impart to the tawny children of the proud Dakotas. In later years, when familiar with the Sioux language, it afforded him supreme amusement to repeat and mimic the incident, and tell how dashed the Indian was at his cool presumption.

The summer of 1835 gone, Mr. Sibley purchased his friend Bailly's interest in the fur trade, and began in earnest to set up for himself, forming a bachelor's establishment, with a mulatto named "Joe Robinson" as his cook, and who, though not over-tidy in his habits, yet served the purpose of his station. This new establishment became "the Sibley Hotel" at St. Peters, there being no public house of entertainment, nor accommodations for travelers, near the place. Under such circumstances Mr. Sibley became the necessary host, not only of the many who bore "letters of introduction" to him, but of all of "genteel appearance" whose love of observation led them to that distant region, his guests being at times "not less than twenty," his hospitality providing for them all, "free of expense," yet in some instances being repaid either by insolence and ingratitude, or by prolonging their stay beyond what common decency and good manners should dictate.

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<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Autobiography, p. 47.

## ANCESTRY, LIFE, AND TIMES OF

In 1835-1836 Mr. Sibley constructed and completed two buildings, one a large warehouse with ample facilities for conducting business and accommodating guests, the other a private residence, a substantial and massive structure, commodious and wisely planned, and which still stands where the pioneering feet first halted at Mendota; the first stone residence ever erected in all Minnesota and Dakota. In the fall of 1835 Mr. Sibley made his first tour of inspection to the fur-trading posts of the company in which he was now a partner, the control of whose interests were in his hands for the whole region of the far Northwest. Situated at long distances from each other, separated by extensive prairies, encampment in the open field and dependence on the gun were matters of necessity. The report having been circulated in advance among the Dakotas that a new man had been placed at the head of the fur trade, there was a general desire to see the stranger, the result of which was that men, women, and children all streamed from their wigwams to behold him, as he entered, passed through, or temporarily stayed in, the Mendota villages. Universal kindness and an overflowing hospitality saluted him wherever he went. On the banks of the Traverse, the last trading post visited, the buildings of the post were inclosed in a stockade of high substantial oak palisades, with port-holes for musketry, and blockhouses at the corners, for the purpose of defense in case of attack, the Indians, accustomed to trade at that point, being of a more than usually wild and quarrelsome disposition, and no entrance was permitted them, save through their chiefs asking and obtaining their chief permission. At this post Mr. Sibley had placed in charge no less a person than the well-known Major Joseph R. Brown, afterward so prominent in the affairs of Minnesota. It was during this year, 1835-1836, an incident occurred which reveals, to some extent, the snares to which so many adventurers are exposed on the one side, and on the other the noble and honorable desire of an Indian parent to provide for his daughter; a condition of things often abused by the white man to his own undoing, as also to the kindling of national resentment on the part of the red man. Mr. Sibley has narrated it in his own language:

It was the custom, in those days, to leave the doors of all buildings unlocked, save only those of the stores where goods and provisions were

I was lying in bed, in the log house, shortly after my return from

my long trip, engaged in reading, when, about midnight, a male and female Indian entered, very much to my surprise. I had mastered enough of the Sioux language to understand the purport of common conversation, and inquired of the man what had brought him to my room at that untimely hour. He took his companion by the hand, and led her to my bedside, and I recognized in her the good-looking young daughter of the Indian before me, who was a sub-chief of one of the lower bands. He commenced by saying that he was about to depart to make his winter hunt, many days' march away, and would not return till late in the spring, and, as he did not wish to expose his young daughter to hardship and suffering, he had decided to ask me to take her in charge. The poor girl, meantime, stood there waiting my reply, having covered her head with the blanket she wore. I excused myself to the father, telling him it would be wrong in me to comply with his offer, that I had no intention of taking to myself an Indian maiden for a wife, for many reasons I could not explain to him, except the one he could most easily comprehend, viz., that it would make all the other Indians and their families dissatisfied and jealous. He was obliged to submit to my categorical negative to his proposition, and retired with his youthful progeny, both disappointed at the ill success of their mission. It must not be supposed, from the Indian point of view, that there was anything savoring of immorality in the proceeding I have narrated. It was considered a laudable ambition, on the part of a Sioux girl, to capture a respectable white man, and become his wife, without any legal ceremony, but the connection was regarded as equally obligatory on both parties, and in many cases, indeed, ended only with the death of one of them. Female virtue was held in as high estimation among the Sioux bands in their wild state as by the whites, and the line between the chaste and the *demi-monde* was well defined."<sup>1</sup>

For nine years, without interruption, or from A. D. 1834 to A. D. 1843, the year of Mr. Sibley's marriage, he lived his bachelor's life at St. Peters, pursuing zealously the interests of the Fur company, of which he was the head, in the Northwest. The long winter nights afforded ample opportunity for study as well as for amusement, and the indulgence of literary pursuits, of which Mr. Sibley seemed to be as fond, in their place, as he was of a sportsman's life in its place. His library, though not extensive, was yet furnished with such works as enabled him to continue and follow up the Greek and Latin classical, and the legal, instruction he had received in Detroit. The English classics; the standard French writers with whose language he was familiar; Gibbon, Hume, Rollin, and others in both ancient and modern history; full sets of Cooper's and Scott's historical novels; Blackstone, Coke, Kent; and, in ecclesiastical history, Mosheim, with some con-

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<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Autobiography, p. 57.

troversial works on religious doctrines and forms of worship; these constituted substantially the select and valuable library of this young pioneer. The transportation of such effects had been by river. It was the study of such works and masters as these which gave to Mr. Sibley an excellence of expression, perfection of literary style, and facility in literary composition, which subsequently attracted the attention of cultivated men, and displayed itself not only in matchless articles to the sporting and other Eastern magazines, journals, and papers, describing the *terra incognita* of the Northwest, its Indian life, and hunting grounds, its beauties and its possibilities, and awaking the admiration, interest, and enthusiasm of thousands who ere long flocked to these wilds to find a home, but which, furthermore, showed itself in articles of the first literary value written for the State Historical Society, and again in the messages and other documents that he prepared, when, subsequently, he became governor of the state, and also in the speeches, to which charmed ears listened during his presence in the National Congress. Business was not allowed so to absorb his entire time as to leave nothing for other equally important interests. It is a sore loss to the state that the priceless productions from a pen so polished, and a mind so full of romantic culture and enthusiasm,—productions descriptive of the wide country he had traveled while it was a wilderness and uninhabited,—should not yet have been collected and published at the state expense. In the light of astounding changes since then, such documents could only afford the greatest pleasure as well as excite the profoundest interest of new generations, to whom the pioneers of the Northwest, and the life of the tribes of the red man, once the undisputed owners of the great domain, are unknown.

As to Mr. Sibley's religious life at this time, it manifested itself in his associations with those more advanced in religious experience and work. Among the officers of the fort, and their wives, were some of "noble and devout Christian character." His early religious training, by a mother whose praise was on the tongues of all, had not forsaken him. He had made a public profession of his faith while at Mackinac, 1830, in the companionship of that rarest among men, Robert Stuart, uniting with the only church in that place, the First Presbyterian, whose pastor was the Rev. Mr. Ferry, father of ex-United States Senator Ferry of Michigan. "My early reli-



gious training," says he, "had so firmly impressed me with the truths of the Christian religion, and of Christian doctrine as enunciated in the Old and New Testaments, that I was content to take them as divinely inspired, and as such they constituted a perfect rule of life for the guidance and conduct of Christians, irrespective of forms of church government and theological disputes, which have torn Christendom into so many sects, and which, for ages, have been prolific of dissension and intolerance, disgraceful in the eyes of the outside world, and in direct and irrepressible conflict with the teachings of the Prince of Peace." Broad-minded and ready to co-operate with all Christians for the common good, he found it easy, not merely to attend divine service, hearing sermons read by Colonel Gustavus Loomis, an officer, distinguished, like Colonel Gardiner or General Havelock, for his piety, but to enter as a constituent member into the first church organization known to the vast missionary region where he dwelt. In June, 1835, the year of the arrival of Rev. T. S. Williamson, M.D., missionary among the Dakotas, and of his associate, Mr. Huggins, a church was formed within the walls of Fort Snelling. In one of the company rooms of the fort, twenty whites, consisting of military officers, Indian missionaries, and those engaged in the fur trade, were assembled by Dr. Williamson on the Sabbath day, and, upon the calling of their names, "the company stood up, in presence of the assembled soldiers, entered into church covenant, and elected elders who were set apart in accordance with the solemn ordination service of the Presbyterian Church, the communion being administered at the close of the service.<sup>1</sup>" Of the session, thus formed, Mr. Sibley was one, and remained as clerk of the same for several years, the church, like the ambulating tabernacle in the wilderness, moving first to one place, then another, now at Lake Harriet, and now at Minnetonka, its little membership perpetually changing, until it settled, finally, as the *First Presbyterian Church of Minneapolis*, its early records following the fortunes of its itinerant development,—Mr. Sibley still residing at St. Peters. With the arrival of Rev. Ezekiel Gear of the Episcopal Church, as United States Chaplain at the fort, Mr. Sibley continued to attend the regular religious services there established, still contributing, however, to the needs of the First Church, whenever called upon, and so con-

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, pp. 487, 488.

tinned till 1856-1857, when the Episcopal parish of St. Paul was established, and the Rev. Andrew B. Patterson of New Jersey, to whose devoted labors it owed its rapid prosperity, was elected as its rector, Mr. Sibley assisting in his support, though having built, at his own expense, the church edifice at St. Peters, the first Protestant church ever erected in Minnesota, west of the Mississippi river. In future years, when removing his residence from Mendota (St. Peters) to St. Paul, as the commanding officer of the military district of Minnesota, 1862, his location in the city, and his relations to the enterprise he had contributed to sustain, naturally drew him to identify himself with the Episcopal Church, the church of his father's family, and of his early associations in Detroit. He was at once elected a vestryman of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and still retains that office to the present time. Of the missionaries, already named, and also of Revs. Samuel W. Pond and Gideon H. Pond, at Lake Calhoun, and Rev. S. R. Riggs, at Traverse des Sioux, the advance guard in missionary work, and of the stations at Yellow Medicine, Redwood, or Lower Indian Agency, and other like enterprises, the published writings of Mr. Sibley speak in the highest terms. A friend of the missionaries, he interested himself in all their movements. Among the Catholics, as pioneers in this work, he refers to Father Galtier, stationed at St. Peters, 1840, and Father Ravoux, 1841, afterward vicar general of the diocese of St. Paul, and to the Right Rev. M. Cretin, subsequently bishop of St. Paul, in the warmest terms, bearing his testimony to the "devotion, zeal, learning, and faithful labors of Protestant and Catholic alike," with all of whom he was on the most familiar terms. As to the primitive character and condition of the red man in our Northern continent, Mr. Sibley himself has given a fine description in one of his annual addresses to the Minnesota Historical Society, February 1, 1856, and quotes Sir Archibald Alison's picture of the North American Indian, though partial, with great approval, the historian saying, "The North American Indian is neither the child of Japhet, daring, industrious, indefatigable, exploring the world by his enterprise, and subduing it by his exertions; nor the offspring of Ishmael, sober, ardent, enduring, traversing the desert on his steed and issuing forth at appointed intervals from his solitudes to punish and regenerate mankind. He is the hunter of the forest,



skilled to perfection in the craft necessary for that primitive occupation, but incapable of advancing beyond it. Civilization in vain endeavored to throw its fetters over his limbs. He avoids the smiling plantation, and flies in horror before the hatchet of the advancing woodsman. He does well to shun the approach of the European race. He can neither endure fatigue, nor withstand temptation, and faster than before the sword and the bayonet his race is melting under the 'fire-water,' the first gift and last curse of civilization.<sup>1</sup>"

Of the number and character of the Indian bands among whom Mr. Sibley was called to operate, and with whom he held an almost daily intercourse, as chief of the American Fur Company in the Northwest, for nearly twenty years, this is the place to speak. Whatever other tribes occasionally tarried in portions of Minnesota, yet the region belonged, by hereditary possession, to the Sioux or Dakotas, as their peculiar hunting ground. According to the accounts given of the Dakotas by Dr. Riggs in his "Introduction," and by Mr. Sibley in his manuscript notes and published explanations, the Dakotas say their name means the "League" or "Allied," and speak of themselves as the "Seven Council Fires" (*Ochetisakowin*). Their divisions are:

(1) *Mdewakantonwans*, "Village of the Spirit Lake," a name derived from a former residence at *Mdewakan*, "Spirit or Sacred Lake," "Mille Lacs," in the country now claimed by the Ojibwas. They were distributed into seven principal villages. Three of these were on the western bank of the Mississippi (Chief *Wapashaw*); at Red Wing (Chief *Wacoota*); at Kaposia (Chief *Little Crow*, or *Ta-wai-o-pa-doo-tah*). The rest were at different points on the Minnesota, twenty-five or thirty miles above Fort Snelling; viz., *Magayuta*, "Goose-eaters;" *Black Dog*, three miles from the mouth of the river; *Pin-e-shaw*, "Good-road," seven miles; *Huyapaw*, "Eagle-head," fourteen miles; *Shakopee*, twenty-five miles. The Lake Calhoun band was a part of the *Pin-e-shaw* following; in all 2,000 souls.

(2) *Wahpekutas*, "Leaf Shooters," claiming the country on the Cannon river; a roving band of five or six hundred, divided by two rival chiefs, *Wah-mun-di-doo-ta*, the "Red Eagle," and *Ta-sau-ga*, "the Cane."

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 459.

(3) *Wahpetonwans*, "Village in the Leaves," a name derived from their former residence in the woods, but now dwelling at Lac qui Parle and Little Rapids; 1,200 population.

(4) *Sissitonwans*, "Village of the Marsh." They occupied the Minnesota valley from Traverse des Sioux to Little Rock, claiming the Swan Lake country on the one side, and the Blue Earth region on the other side, of the Minnesota river, the great body of them moving northward and westward, and making their corn-fields around Lake Traverse and Big Stone lake; a population of about 2,500.

(5) *Ihanktowana*, one of the "End of the Village" bands, estimated at four hundred lodges, or 4,000 souls. The Dakotas on the Minnesota river averaged not more than six inmates to a lodge, while on the prairie, where the material for tents was abundant, yet tent poles being scarce, they averaged about ten. The Ihanktowana were divided into the *Hunk-pa-ti-dans*, the *Pah-bak-se*, or "Cut Heads," the *Wah-zi-ku-te*, or "Pine Shooters," and the *Ki-yuk-sas*, or "Dividers," i. e. "Law Breakers." Their range was along the James river and on the north of the Missouri as far up as Devil's lake. From the *Wah-zi-ku-te* branch of this division sprang the Assinniboines, or *Ho-he*, of the Dakotas, who, revolting, joined the Crees and other bands with whom the Dakotas were at war.

(6) *Ihanktowans*, the other of the "End of Village" bands, estimated at two hundred and forty lodges, or 2,400 souls. They were usually found west of the Missouri and the two related bands were described by the general name Yanktons.

(7) *Titonwans*, "Village of the Prairies," numerically equal to one-half of the entire Dakota tribe, claiming about 1,250 lodges, or 12,500 souls. They lived on the west side of the Missouri, and reached to beyond the Black Hills. They were divided into seven bands, viz., the *Sie-an-gu*, or "Burnt Thighs," the *E-ta-gi-pe*, or "Bow Pith," the *Si-ha-sa-pa*, or "Black Feet," the *Mini-kan-ye-wo-gu-pi*, or "Who Plant by the Water," the *Oo-he-nom-pa*, or "Two Boilings," or "Two Kettles," and *Og-lal-la* and *Hunk-pa-pa*, the meaning of which is uncertain.

Such the native warriors among whose society the lot of Mr. Sibley was cast, and the combined force of which, save the Titonwans, he had to contend against in after years, all the rest, save the upper Sissitonwans, implicated in the

bloody massacre of 1862. Most warlike and passionate of all the Indian tribes upon the continent were the Sioux or Dakotas, yet not without many noble traits of character. A terror to all the rest, and scourge of their neighbors, their hereditary foes were the Ojibwas (Chippewas), between whom and themselves existed, as Mr. Sibley notes, "a hate bitter as that of Hamilcar to the Roman name, Chippewa against Dakota and Dakota against Chippewa," sanguinary, implacable, eternal.<sup>1</sup>

Of all these, "Old Wapashaw," long dead, was the hereditary chief of greatest influence among the people of the lakes, his word being law, not alone with his own band, but with all other bands belonging to the same division. "Little Crow, Sr.," father of "Little Crow, Jr.," who afterward figured in the great massacre of 1862, was also held in high esteem by his band at Kaposia, and favored the progress of the red man toward the white man's civilization as a matter of necessity. At their first acquaintance, all the Dakota bands were friendly to the whites, and it was a rare occurrence for the latter to be molested in person or in property while traversing their country. Notwithstanding their warlike disposition, their relation to the white man was ever that of amity until provoked to deeds which justice and kindness could easily have averted. In some respects they were in advance of the white man's boasted Christian culture, especially in the observance of the rules and laws of natural morality. They were so honest that it was regarded as disgraceful for a warrior to steal. The door of the white man was seldom locked, and articles of costly value, coveted and prized by the red man, were, while still exposed and unprotected, by night as by day, yet safe as if secured by prison bolt and guard. The thief was deemed unworthy to be a warrior, and ostracized because of his propensities. Female chastity was a notable characteristic among the Sioux bands, and the violator of this virtue was an outcast subject to all insult and humiliation. The "Virgin Feast," a sacred institution among the Indian bands, and a test of private purity, was ever closed against the sad unfortunate whose life forbade her entrance to it. The care of widows and of orphans was felt to be a duty. Deprived by death of their protectors, they became an object of the common charity, and shared the comforts of the camp and

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 460.

their full proportion of the spoils and products of the chase. A sense of natural justice and of truth was everywhere respected and admired, and stood in rank co-equal with that sense of inborn courage apart from which the Indian was accounted unfit to live. As to their religion, it was that of inferior form known to untutored tribes, being, in large part, of the fetish sort. Neither polytheists nor monotheists, they yet believed in the existence of a "*Gitche Manitou*," or "Good Spirit," everywhere present, and a multitude of minor spirits dwelling in trees, oval-shaped stones and sticks, whose kindly offices they could propitiate by ample sacrifices of tobacco and other trifling articles, and thus protect themselves against disease, disaster, and death. The belief of a future state, so often attributed to them, in which luxuriant hunting grounds are adjudged to the good, but wild wastes to the bad, had no existence in the breast of a Dakota. Their impressions of a life beyond this were at best but "shadowy, uncertain, and unsatisfactory."<sup>1</sup>

Such were some of the chief virtues, and such the religion and tribal condition, that characterized the Dakotas in their primitive state, before their demoralization began, in 1837, when the United States acquired lands east of the Mississippi, and the Dakotas became *proteges*, by treaty, of a "*paternal government*" whose officials swindled them at every step, corrupted them at every point of contact, enraged them to deeds of revenge, and made them heirs of the white man's crimes and abominations. The "philanthropy" by which the red man was to be lifted up from his so-called degradation, as a savage, and placed on a level with the Christian son of Japhet, was a fruit that turned to ashes in his mouth, and the "civilization" that pledged superior condition and varied blessing "left him a stranded wreck in the great ocean of existence."<sup>2</sup>

The true character of the early Indian traders, at the head of so many of whom Mr. Sibley was placed, must not be confounded with that of government officials, so often responsible for Indian outrages, nor with a reputed character fastened upon the traders either from malice, suspicion, or ignorance. From the very beginning, when, nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, Jean Nicollet, a young Frenchman, and interpreter

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 460.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Sibley. Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. III, p. 820.

for a Canadian fur company, first set foot on the soil of what is now Minnesota, and Canada became the chief nursery for bold and hardy explorers, the men who devoted their lives to such pursuits were marked by strong and peculiar features. It was remarkably so in the case of the Minnesota pioneers. Despising the comforts of home, and inspired with the love of adventure, excitement of new scenes, and hope of new discoveries more than a prospect of gain, and fascinated, in the vigor of youth and prime of life, with a freedom beyond the restraints of law, determined and civilized modes of action, they periled their whole existence in devotion to that which, in all ages and in all lands, has been regarded as meritorious in the highest degree, and worthy of lasting fame. They were the hardy van-couriers of human progress, carrying into the heart of untrodden wilds the seeds of a new order of things, germs of a new development, destined to spring and bloom and bear fruitage of blessing to the latest generations. Of different nationalities, they yet all belonged to that "*Audax Japeti Genus*," of which Horace speaks, a race who, with triple brass around the heart, could encounter the surging deeps and leap the watery barriers that separate lands and tribes and nations and tongues, exploring the vast unknown, scaling the mountain, delving the rock, prostrating the forest, subduing the savage, even assaulting the sky, and on whose indomitable energy, skill, and unbounded courage, has been built the world-wide maxim, "*Nil arduum est mortalibus*,"—"For mortals, nothing too hard!" Compelled to subsist, and lawfully taking advantage, not only of hunting and fishing, but of trade offered by Indians, they conducted with honor, while enduring with joyful spirit their self-imposed hardships, a business whose benefits all the world has shared. Among these were such men as a Joseph Brown and Joseph Renville, a Louis Provencalle and Louis Laframboise, the two Faribaults, Alexis Bailly, Norman W. Kittson, Franklin Steele, Henry M. Rice, Wells, Prescott, Forbes, McDonald, Morrison, Beau-lieu, Oakes, Borup, and other prominent traders, sketches of whom have been given by Mr. Sibley in various productions at various times.<sup>1</sup>

An impression widely spread for a time, and injurious to the good name of the Indian traders and early settlers of Minnesota, Mr. Sibley has felt it his duty to correct and repel

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, pp. 463-470; Vol. III, Part 2, pp. 244-250.

the false accusation that they were men of dishonesty, fraud, and villainy of every conceivable dimension, intent only on traffic, lust, and blood, at whatever cost. Of whatever transgression and crimes the later generations of men who have come to Minnesota, bent upon high speculation, rapid gain, and immense fortunes, unscrupulous as to the means employed, the early settlers of Minnesota are not amenable to such accusation. If here and there, some unprincipled trader was found, or man of untruth and dishonor employed, yet that such was the character of the Indian traders, the *voyageurs*, the early settlers, and pioneers of the State of Minnesota, seems to be a venomous libel, exceptionally false. Mr. Sibley shall refute, in his own words, this calumny so undeserved:

“ Perhaps no body of men have ever been so misunderstood and misrepresented as those of which the Indian trader was a component part. To them have been ascribed not only all the evils and outrages that are the accompaniments of frontier life where law is unfelt and unknown, but fraud and villainy of every conceivable description. The very accusations, however, contain their own refutation. With too much self-respect to contradict charges so absurd, and with an undue contempt for public opinion, it is not surprising that scarcely a voice has been raised, or a pen wielded, in his behalf. An unwritten chapter yet to be contributed to the records of the Northwest will place the Indian trader in a proper light before the country, while it seeks to extenuate neither his defects nor his vices. These traders were a class of men distinct from all others in modes of thought and life, and cannot, therefore, be justly measured by the standard which obtains in civilized communities. For the most part, they were men of little or no education, but of remarkable energy and rare fidelity to their engagements. The whole system of Indian trade was based upon the personal integrity of employer and employed, the former generally residing hundreds and even thousands of miles distant from the place of trade, and furnishing large amounts of merchandise to his agent or clerk, for which he held no security but his plighted faith. With the requisite number of men to perform the labor of transporting his goods and supplies in bark canoes, this trusty individual wended his way, in August or September, to the scene of operations, where he erected his wintering house, furnished his Indians with necessary clothing and ammunition, and dispatched them to their hunts. In many cases his principal could obtain no knowledge of his movements until his return in the spring with the fruit of his exchanges. If a clerk, he was paid the amount of his salary as agreed upon. If trading on his own account, the sum of his peltries was made up, and the difference between it and the invoice of goods furnished him added to the wages of his men, which were always paid by the principal, told the story of his profit or loss. Furs being of no intrinsic value, but entirely subject to the fluctuations of fashion, it often happened that a poor trader possessed of an unusual number of skins of fur-bearing animals and hoping to make money by the winter's



operations, had that hope dispelled by finding that prices had gone down to a low figure, and that he had plunged himself into debt. In such cases the sufferer consoled himself with the thought that next season would show a different result, and so he returned to his wintering ground, by no means a despondent man.

"While departure from strict honesty was of rare occurrence between principal and clerk, no scruples were felt in taking any advantage of an opponent in trade, whether fair or unfair. A state of warfare always existed between rival establishments in the Indian country, save in times of sickness or scarce provisions, when hostilities ceased, and the opposite party came to the rescue of those in distress, and afforded every assistance possible. Such exhibitions of qualities so contradictory were characteristic of all the old class of Indian traders.

"In times of sickness among the Indians themselves, the trader was to them a ministering angel. No one was sent away unrelieved so long as his stores lasted. The consequence of such generosity bore its legitimate fruit. The reliance of the savage upon his trader became in course of time almost without limit, and he took no important step without first consulting him. The white man was the confidant of his joys and his sorrows, and his influence was augmented in proportion, an influence sometimes used to accomplish selfish and unworthy purposes, but more frequently employed for the benefit of the Indian himself. As the trader received his goods on credit, at a stipulated price above cost, either from individual merchants or from associations, so in turn he made advances to the Indian hunters, as his knowledge of their characters for honesty and skill in the chase justified him in so doing. The system of credits was adopted more or less generally throughout the Northwest, and has not entirely ceased even at this day, but it must soon come to an end, for civilization, with all its blessings, can afford no substitute for the simple Indian trader of the olden time, who, equally with honest "*Leatherstocking*," shunned the society of his fellow white men, and, above all, despised the whole machinery of law; and the contact of the Indian with the whites had so far demoralized him as to render it unsafe to trust his honesty."<sup>1</sup>

In his manuscript autobiography, Mr. Sibley returns to the same theme, with evident pleasure, as if delighting to resume a theme on which he was so well qualified to speak. He says:

"It affords me pleasure to bear witness to the fidelity and honesty of the Canadian *voyageur*. In after years, when at the head of a district, as partner of the great American Fur Company, comprising the vast region north of Lake Pepin to the British boundary, and west to the streams tributary to the Missouri river, I had within my jurisdiction hundreds of traders, clerks, and *voyageurs*, almost all of whom were Canadian French, and I found abundant occasion to test their honesty and fidelity. Goods amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars, nay millions, were annually intrusted to men, and taken to Indian posts, more or less remote, with no guarantee of any return except the honor of the individual, and it is cred-

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, pp. 462-466.

itable to human nature that these important trusts were seldom, if ever, abused. It may seem strange that men of education and culture could be induced to endure the hardships incident to the life of an Indian trader, and yet many such could be found among that class. The love of money was not the incentive, for rarely did the trader accumulate, or become wealthy. There was a fascination in such a career which once entered upon was seldom abandoned, a fascination difficult to describe, except on the theory that the tendency of civilized man when free from restraint is toward savagery as the normal condition of the human race. There was a charm in the fact that in the wild region, inhabited only by savage beasts and still more savage man, one was liberated from all trammels of society, independent and free to act according to his pleasure, and moreover to be regarded by those among whom he was thrown as a superior being, their friend and their counselor; when sickness prevailed to prescribe for them, in hunger to feed them, and in all things to identify himself with their interests, and virtually become their leader. What wonder, then, that he should exercise so potent an influence with this wild race!"<sup>1</sup>

With no less a sense of justice, and clearness and beauty of language, the same gifted pen elsewhere bears testimony to the character especially of the early settlers, the brave prime pioneers, of Minnesota:

"The pioneers of Minnesota, as a class, were far superior in morality, education, and intelligence to the pioneers of most of the older territories, and they have left a favorable impress upon the character of the state. They were by no means free from the vices and frailties of poor humanity, but, on the other hand, were for the most part distinguished for charity to the poor and friendless, hospitable even to a fault, and enthusiastically devoted to the interests and prospects of our beautiful Minnesota. Although, generally speaking, men of limited school education, there were exceptions to this rule, individuals being found among them of respectable literary attainments. And for the most part they were religiously inclined. Men who are brought face to face with Nature in her deepest solitudes are led naturally to the worship of that Great Being whose hand alone could have created the vast expanse of wood and prairie, mountain, lake, and river, which spread themselves daily in endless extent and variety before their eyes. They were not particularly given to respect law, especially when it favored the speculator at the expense of the settler. At the land sales, on the falls of St. Croix, when the site of the present city of St. Paul and the tracts adjacent thereto on the east side of the Mississippi were exposed to public sale. I was selected by the actual settlers to bid off portions of the land for them, and when the hour for business arrived my seat was invariably surrounded by a number of men with huge bludgeons. What was meant by the proceeding I could of course only surmise, but I would not have envied the fate of the individual who would have ventured to bid against me."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Autobiography, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. III, Part 2, p. 244.



These excerpts from the various productions of Mr. Sibley, taken in connection with previous descriptions, furnish a fair account of his early environment, and assist us to make for ourselves a complete tableau of the early scenes and society in the midst of which he moved as the central figure, and rehearsing which he might with equal propriety and justice have said, "*Quorum pars magna fui.*"

The romantic incidents that illustrated and enlivened the career of Mr. Sibley, in the rôle of an Indian hunter, as well as in that of the fur company's general inspector, are full of interest and amusement. The year 1840 was signalized in this respect by a hunting expedition to the "neutral ground," sixty miles wide and one hundred and fifty miles long, interposed by the national government as a barrier to prevent the collision of the Sacs and Foxes with the Dakotas, a theatre of sport two hundred miles away from Mendota. No less than seventy days were required for this adventure. The Dakota warriors being ready, Mr. Sibley, with his friends, Lieutenant John C. Fremont, the "Pathfinder," subsequently general in the United States Army, Alexander Faribault, W. H. Forbes, "Jack Frazer," a renowned half-breed, two carts, and two Canadian *voyageurs*, accompanied them. A camp of seventy lodges, with over one hundred men and their families, each family having one or more ponies, constituted the expedition. Long poles trailing on the ground, and attached to the sides of the ponies with an extemporized basket of leather thongs woven between them, baggage in the basket, and children surmounting the whole, all wending their way, Indian file, through the snow, presented a unique and primitive appearance. It was a sight congenial to the pioneer spirit, and cheerful, daring, and adventurous disposition, of young Sibley. The older men marched in the van, the horses and ponies were led by the women, the line extending to great length, the women acting as porters, according to the Indian rule of honor which forbade the warrior such a service, and when crossing streams skimmed with ice, water waist-deep, bearing the whole burden of the camp in their arms and on their heads. When halting for the night, the lodges were erected by the women, the ponies turned out to graze, the men calmly smoking their pipes. The expedition this year was not the most successful. Three days elapsing, Mr. Sibley and his company, parting from Forbes and the two Canadians, struck off

from the Indian camp, and ventured upon an independent enterprise, their commissariat a few pounds of wild rice and no salt, their appetites trusting to the hope of securing abundant game. A promise to return in twelve days was made. Brought near starvation on the fourth day, and discovering an infirm old stag lying in the grass near a brook, scarce anything but hide, horns, and bones, it was decided to have mercy on him, "shoot him dead," and satiate their hunger by a culinary preparation from his venerable carcass. Having feasted, but not to their satisfaction, although an improvement on the saltless wild rice, they went recumbent to their slumbers, as night came on, composing their wearied limbs, only to be aroused by the roaring of the flames, some miserable savage having set fire to the prairie for the purposes of spectacular illumination. On the fifth day the "neutral ground" was sighted and soon thereafter reached, Mr. Sibley and his guests having turned their faces thitherward. Fremont, disgusted with the toils and exposures of this savage mode of life, proposed to make at once for Prairie du Chien, one hundred and fifty miles distant, Mr. Sibley agreeing to attend him, taking with him "Jack Frazer," the two Canadians and their horse carts, and promising to rejoin the expedition in twenty days. Through the forests, across the plains, and swimming frozen streams, these hardy men pursued their way, escaping capture by the Sacs and Foxes, and arriving safely at their destination, where Sibley and Fremont parted company. Returning after twenty-eight days to the Indian camp, their presence relieved the warriors of much anxiety. Starting in two days more for Mendota, Mr. Sibley at last reached his home, welcomed warmly not only by the villagers, but also by the entire inhabitants of Fort Snelling, who feared that some disaster had occurred, or sickness or death had overtaken him.

The year 1841 was yet more eventful. A second expedition was agreed upon, and the mode of its inauguration is of special interest to the reader. On a designated day, according to the usual custom, a huge feast was prepared at Mendota, and invitations extended to the men of the Dakota villages to come and partake. The *menu* was, of course, presumed to be sufficient, and women, children, and babies, prepared to share in the entertainment, and also to enlist for the chase so far as possible. It was a rare occasion. A thousand persons,

of all kinds, answered to the call, delighted to see the viands Mr. Sibley's capacity had provided for them. The gorging process accomplished, and the atmosphere thickened with the fumes of the calumet, hundreds of small sticks painted red were distributed, which, when voluntarily accepted, pledged the receiver to be bound as a member of the expedition, subject to its dangers and its directions. No less than one hundred and fifty accepted the red sticks. A commission of ten of the bravest constituting a tribunal or high court, both of legislature and of judicature, was appointed and assigned to the control of the expedition, the government of the camp, the enactment of rules, and the infliction of punishment upon the violators of the same. The sixth day distant was decreed as the day of exodus to the neutral ground, all parties to be on hand, pitching their buffalo-skinned tepees on a spot in the rear of Mendota. The day came; one family was missing. Instantly a *posse comitatus* from the tribunal sped their way, mounted on ponies, to the delinquents' village, twelve miles away, and reappeared in a few hours with the man's whole lodge and appurtenances, packed on the back of a horse, the man walking behind, with downcast countenance, his family trudging along at his side. Commiserated by the high court of braves and by the tender mercies of the camp, the poor victim of the majesty of the law was let off from punishment with a solemn charge not to attempt the rôle of anarchy a second time, nor dare again to evade his sacred obligations, or tarnish his word, or defile the sanctity of the "red stick," except upon pain of exemplary and open punishment. The signals given, the expedition began to move; rifles, shotguns, bows and arrows; paint, plumes, and ponies, horses, carts, and trailing poles, men, women, and children, all lengthening, serpent-like, in tortuous way, and in Indian file, along the road. Three days subsequently, Mr. Sibley and his company set out and overtook them at the Cannon river, himself and his party coming at once under the new jurisdiction, where there was "no respecter of persons." The tribunal determined the boundaries of the daily chase, forbidding transgression of the limits, a precaution needed to restrain the ardor of the young men, who otherwise would have overrun the country and frightened away the game. The law was severe, an unmerciful thrashing sometimes being visited upon the offender; at other times the ripping of his tent to pieces, kicking of his crockery,

breaking of his kettles, splitting of his wooden bowls, emptying his larder, and tearing off his garments, frequently leaving him like the man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves,—“beaten, stripped, and half dead!”

None of woman born are exempt from the vicissitudes of fortune. It fell to the lot of Mr. Sibley to be numbered with the offenders, the chain and the compass not being used to fix with accuracy the strict line of delimitation, as nations use it when adjusting their respective boundaries. Venturing too near the fore-announced border of the chase, a warrior, hid in the grass, sprang suddenly from his ambush, gave the regulation whoop, and, rushing like a young tempest upon the unsuspecting and surprised adventurer, snatched from his hands his splendid shotgun, and, lifting it high, was about to destroy it with a descending stroke. Quickly reminded by Mr. Sibley that the destruction of such guns, hard to be repaired, and rarely to be got, was unsoldierly, and a loss not to be remedied, the warrior restored the fowling-piece, but at the same time snatched the fine fur cap from Mr. Sibley's head with the pleasing announcement that the wrath of the tribe would cyclone his tent that night and exact atonement for his transgression. It is a scene for pity and amusement both, to see the future orator in Congress, and governor of the State of Minnesota, half-rigged like an Indian, on this occasion, riding ten miles bare-headed, thermometer twenty degrees below zero, ears, nose, scalp, entire face, and head, stung and suffering with intense cold, icicles dependant like oriental jewels from the nostril, and hoar-frost adorning and matting the beard, the victim of the new jurisdiction shivering and bobbing homeward *renovare dolorem* to his friend Faribault, and advise as to what was best to be done in view of the impending visitation and calamity. Such predicaments excite sympathy and sometimes provoke smiles. Reaching his splendid buffalo-hided lodge, Mr. Sibley sought counsel from his friend. The culinary wisdom, always “profitable to direct,” and some ethnological experience, soon suggested a successful prophylactic against the impending wrath. Gathering the entire contents of his own well-stored larder, Mr. Sibley prepared a sumptuous feast of fat things, and, dispatching messengers, extended cordial greetings and invitations to the members of the high court to repair to his tent and partake of a meal specially provided for them, in view of their fatigue, and the

cold day's ride they all had experienced. Accepting the welcome message and entering the lodge, they devoured everything before them except their guest, highly gratified at the hospitality, their pipes being loaded with tobacco, each official politely presented with a handsome plug of the same, high eulogies of Indian nobility attending the ceremony. The result was all that could have been desired except the loss of so much excellent provision. The splendid tent was not "ripped into ribbons." In view of the consideration the high court had received, they promised not to molest it. The fur cap was restored, but not worn again for some time, until after a satisfactory shaking and the necessary fumigation!

It is almost impossible to narrate the incidents in Mr. Sibley's Indian career without destroying the narrative itself, written, as it is, by his own hand, with such matchless perfection of color, taste, and style. It is found in full beauty, in the *Minnesota Historical Collections*, to which the present writer is so much indebted, and in the *Wildwoods Magazine*, where various articles and reminiscences of his early life are published by the gifted author, and not surpassed by anything that ever came from the pens of Frank Forester, Marryatt, or Fennimore Cooper. It is but the merest hint of this so admirably told expedition we can give, and the reader must consult for himself the original, whence our information has been extracted.

The hunting ground once reached, the winter lodges are at once erected, the camp protected by a *chevaux de frise* strongly constructed, and both difficult and dangerous to be pulled down. A sort of fort, it was loopholed for musketry, and not easily stormed by the enemy. Within this inclosure the women and children were conscious of great security, enjoying the winter season as comfortably as at home, and guarded by men of advanced years, too old for the duties and the dangers of the chase, the younger ones left free to follow their vocation. As to the mode of hunting deer among the Dakotas, Mr. Sibley informs us, with the same particularity with which he sketches all the scenes of his pioneer life. An extended line, with eighty or one hundred yards between the hunters, being formed, a swift advance is made, completely scouring the whole country. The slain deer remains where he fell until the return of the owner who shot him. The skin and the hindquarters become the property of the hunter, the

remainder being in equity divided among the less successful, the widows and the orphans. Owing to the abundance of game during the period of this expedition, "no less than from twenty to thirty deer were the average day's hunt, besides elk, bear, and other animals killed with firearms, and beaver and otter taken with traps by men who were past the age when they could endure the exhausting exercise of hunting."<sup>1</sup> During the whole winter, five months long, from October, 1841, to March, 1842, Mr. Sibley remained with the hunters, one of their number, assuming their dress, copying their manners, entering into their sports, becoming more familiar with their language and their character, and thus unconsciously being educated for a future mission in the red man's behalf, which he as little suspected at the time as did they. In this memorable expedition, the sum total of the game secured by the camp was 2,000 deer, sixty elk, many bears, and a number of buffaloes, with six panthers. Speaking of his costume about this period, he says: "I allowed my hair to grow very long, and for some time past had worn no other covering on my head, and being bearded like a pard, and dressed in Indian costume, with two enormous dogs at my heels, the men crowded about me, wondering where such a wild man of the woods had come from."<sup>2</sup> It is one of the remarkable statements, which, however, we shall find fully justified by Mr. Sibley's later military life, that he continued to observe the Sabbath, even while hunting with the Indians. "I made it a practice," he says, "to hunt with the Indians every day, except Sunday, when I remained in my lodge."<sup>3</sup> But once only he seems to have mistaken the day. Starting, one Sabbath morning, as he supposed it to be, to visit a party on necessary and important matters connected with the United States Government's action, he walked twenty miles, and reaching his destination found the gentleman he wished to see in charge of a party of ten men, all engaged in work. Wondering that his friend should encourage labor on the Sabbath day, he expressed to him his surprise at what he saw. He was instantly corrected, not without amusement, and informed that the day was "Thursday, and not Sunday," and was not entitled to the sanctity Mr. Sibley had attached to it. "The

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<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 264.



fact was," says Mr. Sibley, "that I had been keeping Thursday instead of Sunday. Pressed to remain, I declined, and took up my march to the camp, which I reached late at night."<sup>1</sup>

During his entire residence in camp, Mr. Sibley's testimony is that he was uniformly treated with kindness and respect, no attempt made to annoy him save once, when one night his lodge and his life were endangered by some miscreant, who, at midnight, kindled a fire under a cart standing near, and on which "two kegs, each containing fifty pounds of powder," were resting. Awakened by the dense smoke borne into his lodge, Mr. Sibley and his Canadians rushed out to discover the cause, and, finding the cart itself on fire, immediately beneath the kegs, and only a moment until explosion and destruction were inevitable, they leaped to the flaming vehicle, removed the powder, extinguished the fire, and returned to their rest.

It was about this time that Mr. Sibley, already enjoying the *nom de plume* of "*Hal a Dakotah*" as a writer in Porter's *Spirit of the Times*, and other Eastern magazines, received a new name, the name "*Wah-ze-o-man-zee*," or "Walker-in-the Pines." This Indian doctorate of honor was bestowed upon him by a Dakota comrade, "*Tah-ko-ko-ke-pish-nee*," or "The-man-who-fears-nothing," whose former name was the one by which Mr. Sibley was called. In consequence of a desperate battle between the Wah-pa-koo-ta Dakotas and the Sacs and Foxes, in which Mr. Sibley's comrade signalized his courage, the later name was assumed. Bequeathing the former name to his white friend, the Indian caused a crier to proclaim aloud to the red men, everywhere, that he had transferred his own title to Mr. Sibley, and that hereafter he must be known as "*Wah-ze-o-man-zee*," or "Walker-in-the-Pines," a second title of nobility indisputable as the proudest worn by royal favorites.

Another, among the many incidents which nearly cost young Sibley his life, was his celebrated encounter with a buffalo, in the fall of 1842, when on an independent hunting excursion with his friends Faribault and Frazer. It must be told in Mr. Sibley's own language, and in connection with his elk shooting, as found described in the celebrated American edition of Colonel Peter Hawkins' English work on "*Guns*

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 264.



*and Shooting.*" The devotee of field sports from his boyhood, and with a passion for adventure, a practiced horseman, and expert with the shotgun and the rifle, athletic, in the prime of life, and boundless in his confidence to dare and do all that mortals may, the time came when the self-conceit of his unsurpassed abilities to cope with anything in sea, earth, or sky, was reduced to a minimum. Sighting a herd of buffalo or elk (uncertain which) on the seventh day of their expedition, the horses, spurred to the game, flew over the ground like the Arab steed in his best moods.

"The prairie," says Mr. Sibley, "clothed in its variegated autumn hues, appeared to rise and fall like the undulations of the ocean, and in all directions might be perceived points of woodland growth giving forth all the tints peculiar to an American forest. A thin belt of trees encircled a lake not distant, the bright sheet of water, unruffled by a breeze, gleaming through the openings in all its glorious beauty. It seemed almost a sacrilege to Nature to invade her solitudes, only to carry with us dismay and death. But other, certainly not more holy, thoughts soon dissipated in us all sense of the magnificence of the scene. Having stripped ourselves of all superfluous clothing, we commenced the delicate operation of approach. A few yards brought us in full view of the herd of elk, as it proved to be, lolling lazily in the sunshine, unsuspecting of danger. Dismounted and flat on the ground, with Indian stealthiness we wormed ourselves along, under cover of the grass, wading through water two feet deep, until emerging on dry ground, within sixty yards of our game. As these magnificent creatures instantly bounded off in great confusion, our double-barrels were discharged, and three elk fell dead. My horse, brought at once to my side by those who had him in charge, I mounted instantly, and the noble animal, entering into the spirit of the chase, set off at racing speed. Having only a revolver, my right hand benumbed with cold, I shifted the weapon to my left, and overtaking the fugitives a mile ahead, managed to discharge it at a female elk distant not more than ten feet. The ball took effect, but the animal plunging into a wide boggy stream, through which she passed successfully, left me no alternative except to abandon the chase."<sup>1</sup>

And now for the buffalo affair:

"Reconnoitering next day," continues Mr. Sibley, "three buffaloes were reported to us as lying down in one of the low places of the prairie. Seven of us in number prepared for the chase. When within three hundred yards of them we charged down upon them at full speed. Shortly alongside, our double-barreled guns told with deadly effect, two of the huge beasts rolling on the ground in death, within a hundred yards of each other; the third, a fine bull, escaped from the other horsemen, who unsuccessfully discharged their weapons at him. Meanwhile the prairie was set on fire by some Indians to the windward of us, the wind blowing violently, and the flames

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<sup>1</sup> Hawkins on Shooting, pp. 265-267.

bearing down upon us, so that we had no time to secure the meat of the buffaloes we had slain. Five times we approached the raging element, and as many times were repulsed, scorched and wellnigh suffocated, until, by a desperate use of whip and spur, we leaped our horses across the line of fire, looking, as we emerged from the smoke, more like individuals from the lower regions than inhabitants of earth. Recovering from exhaustion, we went in search of the buffaloes, and descried a number on the top of a hill, bare of grass, and to which the fire had driven them. There was a very fine fat cow in the centre of the band, which I made several efforts to separate from the others, but without effect. She kept herself close to an old bull, who from his enormous size appeared to be the patriarch of the tribe. Being resolved to get rid of this incumbrance, I shot the old fellow behind the shoulder. The wound was mortal, and the bull left the herd, and went off at a slow gallop in a different direction. As soon as I fired I slackened the speed of my horse to enable me to reload, determined to pursue the retiring mass, trusting to find the wounded animal on my return. Unfortunately, I changed my mind, and sped after the bull to give him the *coup de grace*. I rode carelessly along, with but one barrel of my gun loaded, when, upon nearing the buffalo, he turned as quick as lightning to charge. At this critical instant I had risen in my stirrups, and released my hold on the bridle-rein. The moment the buffalo turned, my horse, frightened out of his propriety, gave a tremendous bound sidewise, and alas! that I should tell it, threw Hal clear out of the saddle, and within ten feet of the enraged monster. Here was a predicament. Imagine your humble servant face to face with the brute, whose eyes glared through the long hair which garnished his frontlet like coals of fire, the blood streaming from his nostrils. In this desperate emergency I made up my mind that my only chance for escape was to look my enemy in the eye; as any attempt to run would only invite attack. Holding my gun ready cocked to fire if he attempted a rush, I stood firmly, although I must confess that I was much disturbed, and thought my last hour had come! How long he remained there, pawing and bellowing, I have now not the least idea, but I certainly felt that he was long in deciding what to do. At last he turned slowly away, and I gave him a parting salute, which let out the little blood left in his body. The only one of the party within view now came up. I was so near the buffalo when dismounted that my companion asked me if I had struck the beast with the barrels of my gun.

"Thus it will be seen that the chase of the buffalo in those early days was by no means without its perils. I did not fail to render due homage to that Almighty Being who had so wonderfully preserved my life. The frequenter of Nature's vast solitudes may be a wild and reckless man, but he cannot be essentially an irreligious man. The solemn silence of the forest and the prairie, the unseen dangers incident to this mode of life, and the consciousness that the providence of God can alone avert them, all these have the effect to lead even thoughtless men to serious and deep reflection."<sup>1</sup>

The dangers of a frontier life were neither few nor small. A single instance here suffices for our illustration. As among

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins on Shooting, pp. 269-271; Wildwoods Magazine, May, 1888, Vol. I, pp. 8, 4.

white men, so among red, there are always "fellows of the baser sort." The camp one night deserted by the warriors gone to the chase, the women and children left defenseless, Mr. Sibley on returning was apprised of the situation, and further informed that strange Indians were prowling near the precincts. A war party of the Sacs and Foxes had come to take advantage of the absence of the Dakota men and attack the camp. The commotion was great. Subduing the doleful death-songs and screaming of the women, crying of the children, and barking of the dogs, he mustered all his forces, five old men and himself, and, having dispatched a trusty boy to bear the news to the Dakotas forty miles away, Mr. Sibley stationed himself at the main entrance with his rifle, two huge wolf dogs, all the loaded firearms he could lay hold of, the five old men at his side, and ordered a general rapid and scattering discharge of the powder and ball in the direction where the Indians were supposed to be advancing. The night being dark, the *ruse de guerre* was successful, an impression being made that, after all, the camp was not so defenseless as the savage raiders might suppose. Five times the shots were fired in quick succession by the little band, the bipeds and quadrupeds remaining silent as the women. The morning light revealed the fact that some sixty savages had actually made an investment of the camp, tying their horses to the trees outside, but had been deterred from attempting an assault. The boy dispatched to bear the news to the Dakotas, sped, like a greyhound, on his mission, delivering his message, and returned next day, having traveled, on foot, a distance of over eighty miles in twenty-four hours. The Dakotas also returned, Little Crow among them, only to receive a merited rebuke from Mr. Sibley for their carelessness. This is but one of many instances where Mr. Sibley was instrumental in saving the lives of scores and hundreds of persons, who, but for his wisdom and his valor, had been victimized to the cunning wiles of the Indians.

But if Mr. Sibley became famous as the Nimrod among hunters of the Northwest, and as the deliverer of an endangered camp, his manhood was not the less adorned by deeds of high benevolence, the remembrance of which lived to bless him in after days. The following winter was one of intense suffering and severity, not only on account of the cold but also because of the depth of the snow. The Indians were falling victims to

starvation, their cattle also perishing for want of food. The camp of the Wahpetons, near the Big Woods, could survive but a few days longer. Repairing to Fort Snelling as soon as the news of the suffering reached him, although discouraged from his enterprise through fear of approaching want to the garrison, yet he enlisted the sympathy of the assistant quartermaster, who acted also as commissary, and secured at last a large quantity of corn and of tallow, himself becoming personally responsible for the value of the whole amount. Selecting his own best horses from his stable and loading four Canadian sleds each with seven hundred pounds of provisions, consisting of tea, coffee, and sugar, stores of his own also being added, he dispatched his trusted clerk, Mr. W. H. Forbes, afterward brevetted in the army for his gallantry, to the Wahpeton camp. The journey was perilous, the dangers were many, the distance was great, over sixty miles away, only half of that distance possible to be traversed on the ice of the river, the other half through the thick timber and deep snow, almost too great a difficulty for man or animal to presume to overcome. Fallen trees, ravines filled with ice and snow six feet deep, high drifts obstructing, and no trail for a guide, it seemed almost a forlorn hope. Perseverance, however, conquered. The camp was reached in a few days, and the wretched Indians looked upon Mr. Forbes and his men as rescuing angels sent by the Good Spirit to redeem their lives from death. The picture was sad enough when the deliverance came. Stalwart warriors, who had suffered long and endured all things to save their wives and children, lay prostrate and exhausted, powerless and almost lifeless, waiting their last summons to depart. The very dogs had been eaten; children were famished and crying; some of the camp had succumbed to death. The relief brought was timely indeed, and evoked from the suffering survivors the deepest gratitude toward Mr. Forbes and his assistants. The crisis over, the return of spring, with its abundant flocks of ducks and geese, brought ample provision to the Wahpetons. With the opening of navigation, the personal pledge to the commissary at the fort was redeemed, and another history of signal kindness and fidelity was added to the many already connected with the name of Mr. Sibley.

But still other spheres of life than those already mentioned levied tribute from the genius and versatile accomplishments of Mr. Sibley. It fell to his lot to be the only civil magistrate

in "a region of country large as the Empire of France," the county seat of which was three hundred miles distant from his home at Mendota. With such dignity of demeanor did he exercise his functions, that, of the simple-minded people by whom he became gradually surrounded, and with whom he came in contact, some were verily persuaded he possessed, by virtue of his office, the high power of life and death. His word was the code imperial, his decisions unappealable. The administration of justice was purely moral, dictated by a sense of what was right before the bar of an enlightened conscience, and under a sense of responsibility to the Judge of all. To no safer hands could such a power have been intrusted. While there was much to solemnly impress, there was much also in the nature of the case to solemnly amuse. On one occasion, a criminal fleeing from justice and evading a warrant issued for his arrest, was, by order of Mr. Sibley, pursued, overtaken, and compelled to return and answer to the charge made against him. The friends of the culprit, fast in his irons, begged hard for judicial clemency. After keeping him in custody for several days, and giving him a taste of "durance vile," Mr. Sibley decided—inasmuch as no jail then existed—to release him, upon condition that he would leave the country for the country's good, threatening dire vengeance in the event of his reappearance or report of his presence anywhere within the limits of the empire. Submitting to the judgment, decreed without any form of trial, he departed, nor was he ever afterward heard of in any portion of the region where his person and his crime were known. In process of time Major Joseph Brown also became a justice of the peace, and learned from Mr. Sibley's *modus operandi* the true method of a genuine and effective judicial administration. The important question of deciding between two contestants whose was the title to a piece of land not yet staked out, had to be considered. The Gordian knot of legal uncertainty was soon cut by decreeing that a "foot-race," by both claimants, to where the land lay, eight miles distant, the first arriver to drive the first stake, should terminate the litigation. The decision was accepted, and the land was pre-empted solely by the difference of the virtue that adjudged the palm to the fleet-footed Achilles as against the slow-moving tortoise. "This," says Mr. Sibley, "was by no means the only instance in which superior rapidity of movement was the means of securing a

valuable pre-emption, but it is believed to be the only case in which speed of foot was made to decide a legal question in obedience to the fiat of a magistrate!"<sup>1</sup>

Nine years of such varied life, so full of vicissitude, labor, romance, danger, and incident, living most of the time as an Indian among Indians, a hunter, a soldier, a legislator, and a judge, and transacting an immense business as the head of the great American Fur Company for the Northwest, had passed away. The year 1843 was an important one for Mr. Sibley. It changed entirely the whole mode of his life, from that of a "bachelor" to that of a "benedict." He resolved no longer to live a single life. The fair woman, who that year became his wife, he had previously met in the spring of 1842, in the city of Baltimore, where, unexpectedly called from Washington to stand as groomsman for her brother, the late Franklin Steele, he first made her acquaintance. So was it ordered by divine Providence. Henry Hastings Sibley and Sarah Jane Steele, the youngest of the family, having just completed her educational curriculum, stood up together at the bridal. The beauty of her person, her bright intelligence, her modesty of mien, her sprightliness and charm, unconsciously impressed a deathless mark upon the soul of the gallant pioneer, though even then not "on matrimonial thoughts intent." No dream had yet occurred that, with the flight of a few months, he would play the rôle of a married man. Soon after the ceremony, General Steele, the father of the recent bridegroom, died, and Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Steele, happy in their union, came to Fort Snelling, accompanied by the charming Sarah Jane. Later, in 1848, the widow of General Steele came to Mendota, and made her home for sixteen years with Mr. Sibley after he became her son-in-law; "a venerable Christian mother," whose influence was everywhere felt, and whose praise to this day is upon the tongues of all her children. At the same time her oldest daughter, Mary H., attended her. As to Mr. Sibley's condition, when Miss Sarah Jane arrived at the fort, it was critical. The perilous encounter with the buffalo, already recited, had caused him to become a cripple, in a measure, for a number of monotonous and weary months, unable to visit Fort Snelling and enjoy the companionship of his friends. Amusingly enough, however, the palsied condition of our pioneer suddenly, as no less surprisingly, gave

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. III, Part 2, p. 268.



place to a marvelous convalescence the moment the news that the charming daughter of General and Mrs. Steele was in the fort; so much so that, without crutches, Mr. Sibley found means to materialize and report, at least once a day regularly, at military headquarters, the visit lasting, however, only the brief period from early morning till late in the evening. Inclined always to read his Bible, he began at Genesis, *de novo*, but seemed to go no further, for the present, than to a special passage felt to be exceedingly important, and no less true, viz.: "*It is not good for man to be alone!*" An interesting history is told in a few words. Henry Hastings Sibley and Sarah Jane Steele were married by the Rev. Ezekiel Gear, post chaplain at the fort, May 2, 1843. At Mendota they lived joyfully together, coming to reside in St. Paul in 1862, when her husband was commissioned as commanding officer of the military district of Minnesota, headquarters established at St. Paul, where ever since Mr. Sibley has remained. The Providence, that gives and takes away, removed from his side the object of his warm affection, and May 21, 1869, he was called to feel the keenest pang of anguish the human heart can know, and mourn the loss of one whose love none else on earth could replace. Mr. Sibley never remarried. The loss of two infant children, and the death of Mrs. Sibley when her youngest living child was but two years old, only served to deepen the great affliction and intensify the sorrow. Two sisters of Mrs. Sibley were married at the homestead in Mendota, *Abbie Ann* to Dr. Thomas Potts, one of the first physicians who settled in St. Paul, and who died several years ago, and *Rachel E.*, who was united to Lieutenant, now Brevet Major General, Richard W. Johnson, United States Army, who distinguished himself in the war of the Rebellion, and is well known as a prominent and useful citizen of St. Paul. The proximate cause of the death of Mrs. Sibley was the care and the loss of her two little children, who died within a month of each other, and while her husband was in the field exposed to the dangers and terrors of the fearful massacre by the hostile Sioux, in 1862.

Of the ancestry of this noble woman it is proper to speak in any history that recites the fortunes of her illustrious husband. She, also, was of stock renowned in the annals of the nation. She was the ninth child and fifth daughter of *General James Steele* of Chester county, Pennsylvania, an officer of



high distinction in the War of 1812. Her father, born in 1768, married Mary Humes of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1800. The nine children, the fruit of this marriage, were (1) Elizabeth, (2) William H., (3) James, (4) John, (5) Mary H., (6) Franklin, (7) Rachel E., (8) Abbie Ann, (9) Sarah Jane. Of these brothers and sisters, one became a physician (Dr. John Steele), another an eminent citizen (Franklin Steele), another the wife of Brevet Major General R. W. Johnson, United States Army, another the wife of Mr. H. H. Sibley. Mrs. Sibley's grandfather was *Captain William Steele* of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who married Rachel Carr of Maryland, and whose children were (1) Archibald, (2) William, (3) John, (4) James, (5) Rachel, (6) Ann. All the sons attained to military distinction in the service of their country, the second becoming a colonel, the other three honored with the rank of general. *Captain William Steele*, the father of these distinguished children, was an influential citizen, a man of wealth and power, and a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church in Sadsbury, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, and served in the Indian and French war of 1756, when France and England were competing for territory on the American continent. This was the last and also the severest time of the intercolonial struggles. After Braddock's defeat, Captain Steele marched with the Lancaster militia to reinforce the Colonial troops, and assisted to drive Montcalm and the French from the command of the Ohio river and Lakes Erie and Ontario, and the Indian country of the Six Nations. In the Revolutionary War, the military distinction of the sons of this valiant man became no less eminent. Colonel Archibald, brother of General John Steele, marched all the way from Lancaster to Boston, and came under the command of Benedict Arnold. His was the famous regiment that traversed on foot the whole distance from Boston to Quebec, the vanguard of the army, in the memorable winter of 1775, and sent to assail that renowned fortress. Successively deputy quartermaster and colonel of the Western expedition, appointed by Washington to this responsible service, he died at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, aged ninety-one years, respected and lamented by all who knew him. His three sons were in the navy. *General James Steele*, Mrs. H. H. Sibley's father, born 1774, an officer in the War of 1812, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general "for gallant and meritorious services in the field." He was an earnest and de-

voted member of the Presbyterian Church. *General John Steele*, his brother, born in Drumore, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, was in training for the Presbyterian ministry, but as soon as the Revolutionary War broke out, entered the army, aged eighteen years, served during the whole war, was severely wounded in the battle of Brandywine, was elected to the legislature in 1802, state senator, Democrat, 1803, re-elected 1804, speaker of the house, 1805, commissioner to adjust the damages sustained by the Wyoming sufferers from Indian attacks, 1806, appointed by Jefferson collector of the port of Philadelphia, and died in that city, 1827, the flags dressed at half-mast and business suspended in honor of his name.

Of such illustrious grandfather, father and uncles, was Mrs. Sarah Jane Sibley, a woman of rare personal beauty, accomplishment, and grace, and whose praises were on the tongue of everyone; a loyal wife, a loving mother, a cheerful friend, a brave adventurer,—sharing without a murmur the hardships and toils of a pioneer life,—a tender-hearted and true Christian, whose example at home and in all the social circles wherever she moved was such as won to herself the respect and esteem of all. The loss of such a wife might well be a wound no time could heal. Her merit is already a matter of public record. “Mrs. Sibley was a lady of rare virtues and accomplishments and well fitted to adorn the prominent stations in society which she occupied for so many years in the city of Washington and in Minnesota,”<sup>1</sup> “a cultured woman, of unusual personal beauty and rare accomplishments;”<sup>2</sup>

‘Minnehaha, Laughing Water,  
Handsomest of all the women;  
She, a wife with nimble fingers,  
Heart and hand that move together,  
Feet that run on willing errands.’

“one who gracefully accommodated herself to the novelty of a frontier life, sprightly in disposition, and devoted to her children, her venerable mother, and her husband. Her death was a great loss.”<sup>3</sup> Nor less meritorious in their respective spheres were her three sisters, Mary H., who remained single during her whole life, and whose rare virtues were not unduly eulogized by all as her body was borne to the grave, Rachel E., the gentle and devoted wife of General Johnson, and Abbie

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. III, Part 2, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> Folsom's Fifty Years in the Northwest, p. 553.

<sup>3</sup> Neill's History of Minnesota, p. 498.

Ann, relict of Dr. Potts, and the mainstay of comfort and help to Mr. Sibley; a woman of sincerity, deep religious feeling, great devotion, quick perception, clear judgment, and of pleasing and sportive conversation;—a helper in suffering and an angel of mercy to the distressed; all of them women whom church and state do well to praise, and whose names and memories their children will not suffer to fade away. The husband of Abbie Ann, viz., Dr. T. R. Potts, was a brother of the distinguished Rev. George Potts, D.D., pastor of the University Place Presbyterian Church, New York City, a man of majestic presence, great dignity, deep piety, of universal esteem in all denominations, and for many years director in the Princeton Theological Seminary. His brother, a prominent and eminent lawyer, Major John C. Potts,—whose father, Rev. George C. Potts of Philadelphia, had four sons and three daughters,—is a gentleman of high distinction and fine scholarship, having served his country in various responsible and high positions, and now in the evening of his life, and abides an honored elder in the Lafayette Presbyterian Church, New Orleans, the valued and esteemed counselor of his pastor, Rev. Dr. Markham.

The family of Mr. Sibley is of rare and remarkable combination, a mixture of genuine Puritan and genuine Presbyterian blood, and, in both streams, of unusual civil, military, and ecclesiastical distinction, and of indomitable pioneer propensity. Children of the first generation of pioneer settlers, they grew up amid the romances of a fresh life, full of the freedom of the air they breathed. At Mendota first, then at St. Paul, they were, in a large measure, moulded by the circumstances of their environment. The proximity of Fort Snelling, where always were found considerable numbers of troops with their officers and families, and easy access to St. Paul, and a share in all the social relations and customs that marked the rapid growth of a new country, made a pleasing and daily intercourse enjoyable, and not without its influence upon the rising generation. Mr. Sibley, a man of affairs and of public interest, was necessarily often absent from home. Society was then comparatively free from that disgusting affectation of airs, etiquette, and ceremony, which now are exacted by the *haut ton* who have scarcely anything more than money, ignorance, show, sham, and shoddy, to commend them as meritorious in the consideration of others of superior

character. Many respectable families in Mendota added to the pleasures of the companionship of the fort. A charming society at length developed itself, bound together at first by a sense of mutual dependence, common interest, sincere personal regard, unbroken by the dissensions of religious sects or debates of political strife. Besides the regular religious service at the fort, and the organization of various small churches under missionary care, in remote places, Mr. Sibley, in 1847,—Mendota being still without a place of Protestant worship,—erected, at his own expense, a neat, commodious stone church edifice, with painted and paneled pews and a gallery, to which he invited ministers of all evangelical denominations to avail themselves of its convenience. As a result, scarcely a Sunday passed without religious service, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, all taking turn in their Sunday visits. When the Civil War was inaugurated and Fort Snelling was made the rendezvous for volunteers, large numbers frequented the little church, while still larger numbers ran riot in violence, causing such terror that the people forsook their homes, and the first spot of Mr. Sibley's pioneer life in Minnesota, and which promised so much for the future, became a deserted village, reduced at last to a railway station. The church edifice was afterward sold to the trustees of the school board for much less than it cost.

During Mr. Sibley's residence in Mendota it still remained as the general *entrepot* of the fur trade, attracting business from the whole upper country owned by the Sioux or Dakota bands. The furs were brought by the traders from the various trading stations, large quantities of buffalo, beaver, otter, fox, deer, and other skins, and, after assortment into various grades, were packed, pressed, and directed to New York, London, and other markets, to be disposed of to the best advantage. The traders received their outfits, and returned to their respective stations, in time to avail themselves of the fall hunts of the Indians.

The home of Mr. Sibley in Mendota was, like the "hotel" of his previous bachelor life, a mansion of hospitality, never closed to the stranger, and oftentimes the retreat of travelers and men of military, civil, social, and scientific distinction. Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan, Major H. S. Long, United States Army, and the celebrated Henry R. Schoolcraft, who

discovered the source of the Mississippi (Lake Itasca), had early visited the new region of which the Mendota home was subsequently the centre. In 1835 the French *savant*, Jean M. Nicollet, was the guest of Mr. Sibley, while conducting his exploration of the Upper Mississippi and the Minnesota. To this learned man, between whom and Mr. Sibley a most tender and loving attachment sprang up, the latter has paid a just and beautiful tribute in the first volume of the Minnesota State Historical Collections.<sup>1</sup> Nicollet soon went into the service of the national government, 1839, and in company with John C. Fremont, lieutenant of the United States Engineer Corps, made the Mendota mansion their home, entering fully into the pioneer life of Mr. Sibley, and accompanying him and his friends, as already seen, in one of their annual hunting excursions. The same year George Catlin made his appearance and produced a work on the North American Indians, which gave him a European fame. With accustomed generosity, Mr. Sibley furnished him horses without charge, in order to visit the Pipestone quarry, with a trusty guide besides, and introductions to gentlemen at the head of the various trading posts. Next to him came Mr. G. W. Featherstonhaugh, United States Geologist, of manners conceited and aristocratic, finding but little favor with Mr. Sibley, and therefore not pressed to make his mansion his home. Notable among the renowned visitors at Mendota was the celebrated Marryatt, of novelist fame, and post captain in the British Navy. Commended to Mr. Sibley in the highest manner, he was installed in the best portion of the house, and for many weeks enjoyed the full extent of its hospitality. It was, however, reserved for Mr. Sibley to minister to Marryatt a merited rebuke such as he never forgot, and which, coming to the ears of the public press, was given to

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<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, pp. 183-195.

"The astronomer, geologist, and Christian gentleman, Jean N. Nicollet, will long be remembered in connection with the history of the Northwest.

"Time shall quench full many  
A peoples' records, and a hero's acts,  
Sweep empire after empire into nothing;  
But even then shall spare this deed of thine,  
And hold it up, a problem few dare imitate,  
And none despise."

The attached letter of Nicollet to Sibley, subscribed "*Adieu, my noble friend; yours, heart and soul,*" says in a word what volumes could not better express, as to the personal character of Nicollet's princely host.

the winds that bore it, not only across the continent, but across the high seas, to the other side. The Maine boundary question was in agitation, and Congress was passing a bill authorizing a call for 40,000 volunteers to teach England a lesson, and \$10,000,000 to pay their expenses. Marryatt "rubbed his hands with glee when he heard the news," remarking to Mr. Sibley that his rank would entitle him to the command of her Majesty's ships on the lakes, and he meant to apply for the position. The whole air, manner, and conceit of Marryatt were so insolent and so disparaging to Americans, and especially to the United States Government, and so utterly out of taste for one who was the guest of an American citizen, that Mr. Sibley figuratively took the burly Englishman by the ears, politely informed him he could thrash him soundly any moment he would appoint for the opportunity, and, warning him — with a sarcasm, the edge of which the "Britisher" could not fail to feel — "if intrusted with the British Navy on the lakes, in case of war, for his own sake *at least to avoid Lake Champlain and Put-in-Bay*, in the waters of both of which the boasted British valor and British skill had succumbed to the pluck of the despised Yankees!"<sup>1</sup> The rapier went through his person, and the breach widening still more by the discovery that Marryatt had been tampering with sixty Sioux warriors, one Sunday, while his host was at church, persuading the Indians to lift the hatchets for "the mother country" should war arise, and then, when detected, basely denying his deed, Mr. Sibley at length dismissed him from his house, and published him in the New York papers as a man devoid of honor and truth, and a disgrace to the English nation and name. Next after Marryatt came the expatriated Count Harastty, a Hungarian noble, whose patriotic struggles and sad misfortunes Mr. Sibley has told with a tender and sympathetic regard. It is needless to specify more. The Mendota mansion became not only historic, but national and cosmopolitan. It was a home for the oppressed, the retreat of the *savant*, and an asylum for all whose manners did not foreclose its kindness against themselves, — a Geneva of refuge, a St. Bernard of hospitality, the capital of the Northwestern pioneer republic, in which the gallant, stalwart, and noble proprietor was monarch of all he surveyed! The burden of preparation and enter-

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<sup>1</sup> Sketch of a Minnesota Pioneer, Chicago Times, January 30, 1886, Pamphlet Ed., pp. 18, 19, Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 482.

tainment thrown upon the ladies of the house hereby was immense, and but for the devotion of the "*three sisters*," Mrs. Sibley, Mrs. Potts, and Mrs. Johnson, to the interests and fame of Mendota, the royal benevolence of Mr. Sibley had failed to find its adequate expression. What we have seen as a matter of history thus far, continued, until, with the development of the country, the change of Wisconsin to a state, and the desire of the early settlers in Minnesota to assert for themselves their right to national recognition, Mr. Sibley was called into still higher and more important spheres of usefulness in the walks of public life.



## CHAPTER III.

MR. SIBLEY'S ENTRANCE UPON HIS CONGRESSIONAL CAREER.—STATE OF THE COUNTRY AT THIS REMARKABLE EPOCH, 1848.—INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES UPON EUROPE.—AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT AND TERRITORIAL ACQUISITION.—NATIONAL DOMAIN.—TIDE OF EMIGRATION TO THE WEST.—NEED OF ORGANIZATION.—STRUGGLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES FOR PREPONDERANCE OF POWER.—THREE POLITICAL PARTIES.—ANTAGONIZING FORMS OF CIVILIZATION.—THE AFRICAN QUESTION, SLAVERY AND THE TERRITORIES.—EXCITEMENT IN CONGRESS AND THE COUNTRY.—FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.—AGITATION.—DECISION OF THE WHIG AND DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN 1852.—SECTIONALISM.—NATIONALISM.—THE INDIAN QUESTION.—DEFENSELESS PIONEERS.—POLICY OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE INDIAN.—PERFIDY.—WRONGS UPON THE INDIAN.—RETALIATION.—TREATIES VIOLATED.—CONFLICT OF THREE RACES WHEN MR. SIBLEY ENTERED CONGRESS, THE WHITE MAN, THE RED MAN, THE BLACK MAN.—THE FEDERAL QUESTION; RELATION OF THE FEDERAL POWER TO INTERNAL AFFAIRS.—AMERICAN SYSTEM.—PUBLIC DEBT.—TARIFF.—TAXATION.—CAPITAL AND LABOR.—BANKS.—INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.—SALE OF PUBLIC LANDS.—ARISTOCRACY.—MONOPOLY.—GIGANTIC CORPORATIONS IN LEAGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT.—COMPOSITION OF THE THIRTIETH CONGRESS WHEN MR. SIBLEY ENTERED IT.—GREAT MEN.—HIS STRUGGLE FOR ADMISSION.—DELEGATE FROM THE RESIDUUM OF WISCONSIN TERRITORY.—UNIQUE QUESTION.—HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE AT THAT TIME.—CURIOSITY TO SEE THE DELEGATE FROM THE HYPERBOREAN PINE-LOG REGION.—REFERENCE OF HIS CLAIM TO A SEAT TO COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS.—HOPELESS.—RELENTLESS OPPOSITION.—HIS MAIDEN SPEECH MAGNIFICENT.—VICTORIOUS.—ADMITTED TO A SEAT.—SYNOPSIS OF HIS SPEECH.—SPLENDID DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF HIS CONSTITUENTS.—HIS ELOQUENCE.—GREAT PRINCIPLES SET IN LOWLY SURROUNDINGS.—THE MAGNITUDE OF TRIFLES.—MINNESOTA'S GREATNESS FROM A SMALL BEGINNING.

THE period in American history when Henry H. Sibley commenced his career as a representative in Congress, A. D. 1848, was one of the most remarkable in the entire annals of the country. A point of national development had been reached surprising to the civilized world. In general, and notwithstanding the great internal excitement, to which we shall later refer, and in contrast with the unsettled and troubled condition of Europe, the American nation presented the grand spectacle of a vast, free, and united people, enjoying tranquility at home with few exceptions, peace abroad,

and a prosperity unexampled since the foundation of the Union. While the stateliest monarchies of Europe were crumbling to the dust, and new forms of government rising on their ruins, the American republic stood firm. In contrast with the older nations settling their internal political differences by means of the sword, the younger nation of the New World resorted alone to the arbitration and umpire of the ballot-box. If institutions in other lands were built up at the price of suffering and the oppression of the poorer classes, heavily taxed and burdened with care, ours were the spontaneous growth and just pride of a free, intelligent people, whose rapid progress, liberal hand, and lofty aspirations commanded the praise of all mankind.

The influence of the United States upon the political institutions of Europe had made itself deeply felt. The forces set at work by the American colonies, lifted to victory in the Declaration of Independence and its results, and the example of a great nation free from dynastic control and risen to glory by right and fact of popular government alone, were not in vain for the world. American success was a challenge to all mankind to try the same experiment. As formerly, a Lafayette, Steuben, and Kosciuszko, so once again, a Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Kossuth, interpreted the American pulse to the nations. Proud champion of liberal principles and of popular rights in the frame and conduct of civil government, the republic hailed with delight the spread of her own doctrines and the triumph of her own spirit, though won at the cost of agony and blood. It was the influence of her own example that broke the Bourbon yoke from the neck of France, and gave to Greece her independence. If later on, the standing armies of Europe, swayed by despotic power, availed to crush for a time the spread of liberal principles, and revolutions and insurrections failed too oft of their proper end, it was only that greater good might come with renewed attempts to cast off the yoke of bondage to certain families who deemed themselves born to rule all other families throughout the world. In 1848 Europe was one vast political volcano, trembling with earthquake, everywhere. Liberal principles asserted themselves as never before, and won, against odds the most discouraging, triumphs the most surprising. And since then wonders were wrought. Not alone did Greece become free and Sardinia acquire a constitutional govern-

ment, Austria a parliamentary rule, Prussia popular representation, Spain universal suffrage and the discharge of her queen, France a republic, and Great Britain the enlargement of her electoral franchise, Germany moving toward a grand imperial confederation of states subject to a central power in many respects like our own, but the whole of Europe changed front under the influence and secret leaven of American institutions.

Great events, the mystery of whose bearing on future ages was unknown to the actors who gave them direction, even as, in many instances, the high Providence that permitted them was unrecognized, were also occurring at home. We speak of the Franco-Prussian War as one of the greatest providential events in history, unmindful of the insult at Ems by which it was provoked. In the same way, regardless of American menace that caused it, and the secret purpose of the movement, we speak of the Mexican War as resulting in one of the greatest blessings to the American people. Enough to say here, a treaty of peace was made between Mexico and the United States of such character as that made between Indians and white men, the superior power dictating the terms and taking the spoils. The annexation of Texas extending to the Rio Grande was the result. Still more. At the same time the adjustment of the Oregon line and title to the territory had been effected, New Mexico and Upper California had been acquired by treaty, and thus 760,560,000 acres of the grandest part of the earth's surface, or nearly 900,000 square miles, had, within four years, been added to the national domain; an addition more than half as large as all that was held prior to the acquisition; the entire domain great as the area covered by all Europe, Russia alone excepted; a domain stretching 300 miles from the Atlantic to the Alleghanies, and from 500 to 700 miles from the Rockies to the Pacific, with the vast Mississippi valley between, bisected by the "Father of Waters," its mouth a mile higher than its source; a domain reaching also from the Gulf to the British boundary; a domain affording to the nation three grand maritime fronts instead of one, — viz., the Atlantic, the Gulf, and the Pacific shores, — with 6,000 miles of sea-coast, and making the Mississippi river no longer the frontier, but the centre of the country, two-thirds of its greatness lying west of Minnesota. These were strides of national progress gigantic as the strides of the fabled gods in space, the contemplation of which makes the head grow dizzy.

Such startling expansion, mocking all Roman conquests, and of lands abounding in inexhaustible wealth, imposed upon the government—especially in view of the swelling tide of emigration, then surging over the Alleghanies and washing to the West, and the increasing dangers from the Indian tribes—the duty of organizing territorial governments for the protection of the lives and property of the pioneers of American civilization, and the defense of their homes and new-born institutions. Greatness was in the cradle, and greatness must defend it. When we think, also, how much still remained to be organized out of the immense Northwest Territory, ceded by Virginia to the United States in 1784, the extent of the task imposed upon Congress, under the almost magical settlement of the country, can be somewhat appreciated, and how important an epoch it was in the advancing grandeur of the nation when Mr. Sibley entered the hall of the national house of representatives.

But still more. Great and imperative as was the duty of the time, a domestic question in the states,—the question of African slavery in the country, an institution whose roots had wrapped themselves round the whole social, religious, and political life of the South,—and imposed upon the country, from its beginning, by alien nationalities,—tended, on the one hand, to retard, and on the other, to precipitate, congressional action in reference to the organization of the territories. Sectional animosity and partisan politics ran high. Each of the two great parties, indeed, strove for preponderance of power in the national legislature, and looked with suspicion and interest on the probable character and influence in the national councils of the new territories and new states that might be formed out of them. Beyond this, however, a third party was already in the rapid progress of its development, openly opposed not only to the extension of slavery in the territories, but to the perpetuation of it in the states. Or, to use a wider generalization, the spectacle presented was that of two distinct and irreconcilably antagonizing forms of civilization struggling for the mastery in the very hour of this majestic territorial expansion. It was Esau and Jacob wrestling in the nation's womb, subject to the eternal decree that "the elder shall serve the younger." One or the other must retire from the scene; how, the future alone could tell. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The political

excitement of the times, vainly sought to be allayed, swelled skyward like a rising flood, and coastward, carrying everything before it, yet, maelstrom-like, and with ascending swirl, beneath whose great gyration the spires of churches, domes of capitols, and literary institutions, even the halls of Congress, disappeared, submerged. It was the one all-engulfing question of the day. Shall the new territories be organized so as to protect slavery? Shall Congress interfere, extending the Missouri compromise line of 1820 to the Pacific, on the parallel of thirty-six degrees, thirty minutes, all north of this free, all south of it bond? Shall that line be repealed? Shall the whole question be submitted, by both sections of the country, to the federal judiciary? Shall the territories be allowed to determine their own institutions? Is slavery national or sectional? Does the flag protect it wherever it floats? What power has Congress, what power has the national executive, in the premises? Nay more, what is the relation of the federal government to the several state governments to whom it owes its being? These were the questions which, in connection with the territorial interest, disturbed the peace of the country, ran the plowshare of division not only between North and South, but through the heart of both sections, sundering, frequently, the tenderest ties and dearest relations. On the one side was the glittering abstraction, in the mouth of the Declaration of Independence, that "all men are born free and equal," a proposition as defective as that all houses are built the same height and furnished in the same style. On the other hand were the positive and constitutionally guaranteed right of the master to the rendition of the fugitive, and the conceded right of the several states to determine their own domestic institutions; Georgia to become free to-day, if she chose, Vermont to become slave if her people preferred it. What shall the future of the great American nation be? that was the all-controlling question of the time. It was in 1848-1849 that Mr. Sibley entered Congress. It was in 1852, the two great national conventions, the one assembled at Baltimore, the other at Philadelphia, the one Democratic, the other Whig, agreed, the one to *resist*, the other to *discountenance*, all further agitation of the question; upon which a third party was formed, and the agitation arose to intensity so great as only to be closed by the bloodiest arbitrament the nineteenth century has known. We, of to-day, live this side

that solemn martial assize, when each section judged the other at the cannon's mouth and the bayonet's point. White-winged peace has returned and slavery is gone. But when Henry H. Sibley stepped into national life at Washington, it was to breathe an atmosphere surcharged with contention, and mingle with elements that threatened the absolute ruin of every interest he was sent to plead and to represent. A partisan delegate could only have failed.

#### THE INDIAN.

The question of the duty and policy of the national government toward the aboriginal tribes of the country was one of the absorbing questions of the time. The Indian war which broke out in Oregon in 1847, immediately after the adjustment of the Oregon line, still continued. In the strongest manner the president appealed to Congress to give authority at once to raise an adequate volunteer force for the protection of the defenseless citizens of the territory. Troops, whose qualities had been tested in the Mexican War, were collected and sent to the scene of disturbance, and orders were issued to the Pacific squadron to dispatch a naval force, with necessary arms and ammunition, to the seat of war. The professed policy of the United States was ostensibly always to cultivate the good will of the aboriginal tribes, and rather restrain them from war by the arts of peace than by force. The success of this policy, however, was too often sadly defeated by various causes, chief among which were vexatious delays on the part of the government in making compensation for the lands occupied by the American emigrants, rifles in hand, and over which the Indian had formerly roamed, and to which he still asserted his ancient possessory right. Repeated covenants, as repeatedly broken; promises made to the ear, and even recorded for the eye, yet left unfulfilled; postponements, prevarications, usurpations, intrigues, and evasions; faith violated and expectation mocked; settlements made long before treaties were ratified; sales of Indian paradises forced, and the prices dictated; suffering, injustice, and cruelty in many ways by government agents and irresponsible adventurers, all could only engender distrust and hate in the breast of a brave, generous, and confiding race, quick to honor good faith, as quick to detect and avenge deceit and oppression.



The result could only be plunder, reprisal, and massacre, ending in open and organized war. The government here is not blameless, and its chapter in Indian history will not inure to its credit. When *justice* to the red man—not to mention compassion—demanded the execution of treaties in which compensation was promised, with payment prompt and complete, for the surrender of possessions and rights immemorial,—and plunder and outbreak followed the breach of faith,—military force was employed to avenge, in turn, that very condition of things which *injustice* on the government's part had provoked. The friendliest relations with the red man have always been possible, and his noble qualities are attested by all who are best acquainted with him. Peace has always been in the power of the government. A comparatively trifling pecuniary expense has more than once secured to the nation millions of acres of the Indian's choicest lands and contentment withal. No less than eight different treaties had been made with as many different tribes, during the two years next preceding the time when Mr. Sibley entered Congress, and whereby *nineteen millions* of acres of land had been won by art and force, and ceded to the government forever, at a cost of only \$1,840,000, a large part of which was consumed in negotiating the treaties themselves. The titles, moreover, to all Indian lands were extinguished within the twenty-nine states of the Union. And when, apart from this, it is known that *death* or *compliance* were virtually the only alternatives presented to the Indian by the white man's advancing civilization, and that even treaties were violated as soon as made, it is no wonder that the savage, exasperated by his smothered wrongs, and driven to despair, should assert his natural right of revenge, and visit, in indiscriminate manner, on innocent parties, the punishment due to the crimes of the guilty.

We see how pregnant with questions of the first moment was the epoch we are only a moment considering. The claims and rights of the *white* man; the claims and rights of the *red* man; the claims and rights of the *black* man, were the chief issues of the hour. The statesmen of the time were called to decide upon the rights and claims, both natural and acquired, of the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, all facing each other in a land Providence had made already the smelting-pot for all nationalities, and the seat of a republic the proudest and greatest that ever awakened to glory. That, notwith-



standing this envied eminence, the moral order of the universe must yet abide, fixed as the laws of our cosmic system, is only what wise men knew and openly uttered. That Providence, the laws of whose dealings with nations are those of his dealings with men, punishing wrong and rewarding right, should visit the crimes of the nation on its own head, is only what the history of nations had already declared and Sacred Writ had foretold. What attitude Mr. Sibley occupied in reference to these great questions, and the policy of the national government in relation thereto, we shall discover further on. It is enough here simply to touch the character of the hour when he was called to assume the responsibilities of the representative of a pioneer people in the formative moments of their corporate life and early exertion.

#### THE AMERICAN SYSTEM.

Another great question of vital economic interest engaged the attention of American statesmen at this juncture of their national history: the question of federal power in relation to the administration of internal affairs, the security of the nation, and the development of her industries. When Mr. Sibley entered the national councils, the condition of the country, though enjoying abundant prosperity, resembled, in many respects, that which existed at the close of the war with Great Britain in 1815. The war with Mexico, unavoidable in vindication of the honor of the nation, had bequeathed to the people the burden of a public debt, and very naturally caused the minds of men to revert to measures of public policy which found expression upon the termination of the previous conflict. It seemed to be discovered that a *departure* from the earlier and traditional policy of the country had occurred in 1815, when peace was concluded with Great Britain. It was claimed that an *enlargement* of the federal power had been permitted, not by means of constitutional amendment, but by legislative *construction*, unwarranted by any just or fair interpretation of the organic law of the nation, but which, nevertheless, regarded as necessary, seemed to justify the establishment of what was called the "*American System*." The impression was deep that, in a case of great and sudden emergency, the national government would be found unable to cope with a strong foreign power, should such emergency arise. The contemplation of the foreign policy, concentrating power in the hands

of a *few*, who are charged with responsibility for the fortunes of the nation and its successful deliverance from danger, seemed to be a wise one, notwithstanding it gave the right to levy forces without restraint, and tax the people without stint. There, lay the strength of nations. The oppression such an aristocratic system might visit upon the poorer classes of the people, and the lordly undemocratic pride and caste it might engender, were forgotten in the impulse to devise a defense against the contingency of future surprise. It was not once considered that the democratic institutions and early policy of the nation could not be reconstructed upon the principles of European dynastic interests. Hence it came to be thought that a great public debt, a restrictive burden on trade, a trammelled industry, a system enriching great capitalists still more, as also bond and property holders of every kind, by enormous taxation levied upon the labor of the country, might, indeed, after all, be a divine blessing, even greater this side than across the water. A *national bank* was the centre and the soul of such an economy, and its history need not here be recited. A *high protective tariff* also found favor, under the euphonious name of good will to "Home Industry" and "American Labor," the laborer induced to believe that a tax upon his toil was a boon to himself; in short, that a government partnership between the government and the protected, whereby the interests of large capitalists were enchanced at the expense of the masses of the people, was the highroad of the poor man to affluence and power. Then came the system of *internal improvements*, devouring indefinite millions exacted from the commerce of the country, a benevolent safety-valve for any surplus of government funds, so preventing an explosion of the national exchequer. Auxiliary to this was the *sale of public lands*, the national proceeds to be distributed among the several states, and the heavy endowment of privileged corporations, all for the benefit of the protected classes, the whole "*American System*" swallowed by a deluded people,—the result being that the rich grew richer, while the poor grew poorer, until, in self-defense, combinations and trade-unions and organizations of every description, hostile to capital, monopoly, protection of the rich, and pouring malediction on an aristocracy of wealth, have honeycombed the land and led to nihilistic and agrarian outbreaks, endangering the peace, welfare, and security of individual, state, and the national life.

Such the general condition of the country as to the great problems that lay before it for solution when Mr. Sibley began his congressional career. What his views, and what his relations to these great questions, how he deported himself, and what the fundamental principles that governed his conduct in every state and national contingency, and along the even tenor of more calm development, his history will declare.

At the period of his entrance into Congress,—the second session of the Thirtieth Congress of the United States,—that body was in its glory. Partisans as well as patriots were there; men distinguished for high ability and of national reputation; men representing conflicting sections of the country, yet dwelling in peace, notwithstanding the high excitement of the times; men of supreme gentlemanly demeanor, as well as some of inferior manners, yet none of more commanding personal presence, dignified expression, more courtly bearing, more shining natural gifts, or more cultured accomplishment. His mere presence attracted attention and gave influence to the interest he represented. In the senate were such men as Hamlin and Hale, Webster and Dickinson, Dallas and Dayton, Cameron and Calhoun, Reverdy Johnson and Jefferson Davis, Corwin and Benton. In the house were such men as Horace Mann and Horace Greeley, Winthrop, Wilmot and Wentworth, Lincoln and Giddings, Alexander Stephens, and Toombs, Rhett and Preston. The two great political parties of the day were the Democratic and the Whig, the one a party whose existence is assured so long as the nation endures, the other a party whose existence was destined to pass away, and but one in a series of parties whose creation, and line of succession, are marked by the crises which philosophical history accounts as nodes of national development. As to the relative strength of these parties in the federal legislature at that time, A. D. 1848, there were in the senate, Democrats 36, Whigs 22, total 58, Democratic majority 14. In the house there were, Democrats 111, Whigs 117, total 228, Whig majority 6. In both houses of Congress the sum of senators and representatives was 296, Democrats in joint ballot counting 147, Whigs 139, giving a Democratic majority of 8. The speaker of the senate was the Hon. George M. Dallas, vice president of the United States. The speaker of the house was the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts. The president of the United States was the

Hon. James K. Polk of Tennessee, then in the last year of his administration, and whose successor, already chosen, was General Zachary Taylor, the hero of the Mexican War.

The public interest in the question of the organization of new territories, soon to become new states in the Union, affected as that question was by the domestic question already adverted to, may be judged by the fact that so soon as the senate of the United States,—assembled in Thirtieth Congress, second session, December 4, 1848, at 12 M., forty-one senators in their seats,—had apprised the house of representatives that a quorum of the senate had appeared and the senate was ready for business, the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois immediately arose and gave notice that on the next day he would ask leave to introduce a "*bill to establish the Territory of Minnesota.*" At the same hour, in the house of representatives, the Hon. James Wilson of New Hampshire—one hundred and seventy-eight representatives having answered to their names—also immediately arose to a privileged question in reference to the *Territory of Wisconsin*. The case was this: In the last Congress, 1847, at the commencement of the session, the Territory of Wisconsin had been represented by the Hon. M. Tweedy, its delegate. During the session Wisconsin was admitted as a state, but with diminished boundaries, the river St. Croix being made the extreme northwestern line of delimitation, thereby severing from the State of Wisconsin a portion of the Territory of Wisconsin equal to 20,000 square miles, and covered by a population of between 4,000 and 5,000 souls, all the counties west of the St. Croix being thus virtually deprived of a government, and the population left defenseless and without right of representation, unless, notwithstanding the admission of Wisconsin as a state, the old territorial government and rights of the people still existed in accordance with the original organic act still unrepealed by Congress. Subsequently to the time when the representatives from the State of Wisconsin took their seats in the house, the then territorial delegate from Wisconsin had formally resigned his seat, leaving the residuum of Wisconsin unrepresented in Congress. Besides this, the former governor of the territory, Governor Dodge, now elected to the senate of the United States, had vacated his chair, leaving the territorial secretary, John Catlin, as *ex-officio* present acting governor of the Territory of Wisconsin, unless such territory is decreed as *ipso facto* non-

existent by constructive interpretation of the act of Congress admitting Wisconsin as a state. Governor Catlin had issued his proclamation to the people, October 9, 1848, to meet at their voting precincts October 30, 1848, then and there to elect a delegate to Congress, in pursuance of which the *Hon. Henry H. Sibley* was chosen. Bearing the certificate of the governor to his election, and authenticated by the seal of the territory, and also bearing a memorial to Congress and to the president of the United States, from the citizens of the portion excluded from the State of Wisconsin, Mr. Sibley now appeared before the house of representatives, duly accredited and qualified, to claim his seat as delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin. Such was in substance the presentation of the case to the house, as a matter of privilege, by Hon. James Wilson of New Hampshire.

The importance of the question could not be overrated. It was, in many respects, novel and unprecedented. It affected not Wisconsin and Minnesota alone, but the whole sisterhood of states and territories in the Union. It dealt with vested rights and organic acts, apparently colliding. It presented a half-score of dilemmas which seemed to offer no choice to the statesman but to be impaled on either horn. If 5,000 people and 20,000 square miles of territory can be disfranchised and disorganized by erection of a state with diminished boundaries, while yet the original organic act remains in terms unrepealed, why not 10,000 people and 100,000 square miles? On the other hand, can the people of a territory have a co-existent dual organization, dual government, and dual representation in Congress?—be a state in one part and a territory in another at the same time? Would it have solved the case if, when Wisconsin was admitted as a state, her *name* had been *changed*? These were problems, and on the answer to them depended Mr. Sibley's success or defeat as a delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin. The Hon. Mr. Wilson supported warmly the claim of Mr. Sibley and the rights of his constituency to representation, citing what he deemed analogous instances in the early history of Ohio and Michigan, and hoped the house, without further discussion, would proceed at once to admit Mr. Sibley to his seat. The Hon. Mr. Cobb of Georgia expressing the wish that a question so grave and unusual might not be pressed to a vote at that time, and Mr. Wilson consenting, the whole matter, with all the papers in the case, was referred to the Committee on Elections, to be reported on at a future day.

It was but natural that such an introduction to the house should only direct the eyes, not alone of representatives, but of senators, also, with rare interest, to the *person* of the delegate from Wisconsin. All the more was this true, inasmuch as the region from which he came, though represented the former year as part of Wisconsin, had now by Wisconsin been "left in the cold," and the fame of the delegate as the "prince of pioneers" and a "mighty hunter" withal, had already preceded him. In the vigor of his manhood, an athlete by nature, stately in form, of proportions magnificent, and but then in his thirty-seventh year, his case and cause excited more interest than any other that occupied the attention of Congress during that whole session. It began with the *first* day of the session. It closed with the *last* day of the session. All the way through from December 4, 1848, to March 3, 1849, the "Delegate from Wisconsin" was a theme for universal remark. There is something amusing in his own subsequent account of his advent to Washington, given in late years to the Minnesota State Historical Society,<sup>1</sup> and from which we take the following, of special interest to the reader. Speaking of his first entrance into the house, he says: "When my credentials as delegate were presented by the Hon. James Wilson of New Hampshire to the house of representatives, there was some *curiosity* manifested by the members to see *what kind of a person* had been elected to represent the distant wild territory claiming representation in Congress. I was told by a New England member, with whom I became subsequently quite intimate, that there was some *disappointment* felt when I made my appearance, for it was expected that the delegate from this remote region would make his *debut*, if not in full Indian costume, at least with some peculiarities of dress and manners, characteristic of the *rude and semi-civilized people* who had sent him to the capitol." In another place, he informs us that when, subsequently to his admission, the bill for the organization of the Territory of Minnesota came up for consideration in the house, the Hon. Joseph Root of Ohio assailed the same with sarcastic abuse and ridicule, "denouncing the measure as farcical and absurd, exclaiming vehemently against the formation of a temporary government in a hyperborean region where agricultural pursuits

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<sup>1</sup> Collections Minn. Hist. Soc., Vol. III, pp. 2, 270.



were impracticable, and where no white man would go, unless to cut pine logs. Others took a similar view of the subject." Upon which Mr. Sibley remarked: "*Probably these wiseacres, such as are still in the land of the living, have had occasion to modify their opinions, somewhat, since that period.*"<sup>1</sup> They were doubtless unaware that the delegate from Wisconsin Territory had been crowned already with honors none of them ever wore, before some of them ever dreamed of political life, and that in the twenty-seventh year of his age, by appointment of the governor of Iowa, he had been constituted sole judge, and, in the absence of a code, supreme law-giver, over a domain as large as the Empire of France, and that his table at Mendota had been honored by guests of scientific and political renown, attracted to his mansion not only from the United States but from foreign lands. Still less did they know that, with just pride, he could quote an ancestry renowned for high judicial, military, and naval, fame in the history of the country from the time of the Revolutionary War down to the then present, and remount even to the days of the Plantagenets. Of Mr. Sibley's personal appearance and of the exalted esteem in which the delegate from Wisconsin was held by a constituency who intrusted to his wisdom and talents the charge of their greatest ambition and loftiest hope, the tribute paid him by one of the first men of Minnesota<sup>2</sup> will be all sufficient. The annotator and editor of her *Historical Collections* says: "Were these annals only to meet the eye of the pioneer, or present population of Minnesota, it would be unnecessary to speak of the personal appearance, the mental or moral attributes of General Sibley, where he and they are so well known; but as they will be perused in after time and in other lands, and inasmuch as the question was raised, it may be well to observe that the pioneers of Minnesota were justly proud of the manly bearing, mental qualities, and exemplary character of the man of their choice, regarding these as *ample offset for any lack of population or commercial importance* that might be urged against their claims to recognition. Nor were they visionary. The writer of this note, not then a resident of Minnesota, spent a portion of the winter and spring of 1849 at the national capital, and can bear witness to the jus-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Chief Justice Goodrich.



tice of these expectations. To say that the delegate *did not suffer by comparison with the members of the body* to which the old settlers had accredited him, would fail to do justice to their good taste. *Henry Hastings Sibley* would, by his stately bearing, have attracted favorable notice at the most refined courts of Europe; his literary contributions in his younger days, both in his own name and under the *nom de plume* of '*Hal a Dakotah*,'<sup>1</sup> proved him to be a forcible and finished writer, while his letter to Senator Foote, which appeared in the *Washington Union*, February, 1850, gave to the outside world the first authentic information concerning these regions, and did much to attract public attention hither. Of his personal character it would seem unnecessary to speak; above reproach, courtly and kind, he, while leading a singularly laborious life, yet finds time to identify himself with every good and charitable work, and is the staunch and sympathetic friend of the frontiersman in his hour of need."<sup>2</sup>

This is high praise, and from the pen of one who himself has merited and received praise. "*Laudari laudato*," is not the common lot of mankind. Were the encomium traced in gold it would not be too costly a tribute to one who deserved so well of his fellows. Were it spread broadcast over the world it would not be a fame too wide for one whose virtues and years have already placed him beyond the reach of empty flattery, and made him indifferent alike to the praise or blame of men.

*Twenty-eight days elapsed* after the reference of the case and the papers in the case to the Committee on Elections, before a report on the same was made to the house. Meanwhile, Mr. Sibley appeared before the committee to plead in defense of the rights of his constituents to a government and to federal representation. His speech before the committee, December 22, 1848,—his maiden effort in Congress,—is one of which any constituency might well be proud, and not only reflected honor on himself, but determined the result of the whole sharp struggle. He proved himself the peer of any debater in the councils of the nation.<sup>3</sup>

It is but the most brief and succinct synopsis of this initial effort that we can here give. Confronted in committee by the

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1 Also under his Indian name, "*Walker-in-the-Pines*."

2 *Ibid.*, p. 271; *Note*, by Chief Justice Goodrich.

3 See. Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, pp. 69-76.

Hon. Mr. Boyden of North Carolina, a reputed politician, who, with bitter pertinacity and scornful expression, championed the outlawry of both Mr. Sibley and his constituency, on the ground that the act of Congress admitting Wisconsin as a state did, *ipso facto*, and without further legislation, dissolve and remand to chaos the residuum of the territory, by delimitation, Mr. Sibley asserted the two following propositions: (1) That the certificate of Governor Catlin, under seal of the Territory of Wisconsin, was *prima facie* evidence of the legality of his election; and (2) that the residuum of the territory, after the admission of its *main portion* as a state, remained in full possession of the same rights and immunities it enjoyed prior to said admission, and which were secured to the people of the *whole* territory by the original organic act.

The first proposition was conceded. In support of the second, and in demolition of the sophistries of Mr. Boyden and others acting with him, Mr. Sibley offered: (1) The *general argument* that when a *large portion* of a territory is not included in the new-born state carved from the *whole* territory, and Congress leaves the organic act unrepealed, this fact in connection with the fact that the general government is under obligation to afford protection to all its citizens, is conclusive in the premises and *ipso facto* determined his right as the delegate of the territory to a seat on the floor of the house. (2) By *contrary supposition* Congress could disorganize territories, and disfranchise, at its pleasure; a policy fit for despots, but repugnant to our American institutions. (3) *International law* consecrates the rule that, except for purposes of public safety, no government can abandon at will any province, county, town, or individual. By the law of nations, the right to citizenship is the inalienable and imprescriptible right of every subject. (4) By the *ordinance of 1787*, all the benefits of civil government and proportionate representation in Congress were organically secured to the whole vast territory of the Northwest, ceded by Virginia to the United States, and of which territory Wisconsin was a part. (5) By the *organic act* establishing the Territory of Wisconsin, an act still unrepealed. (6) By *historic precedents*; (a) in the history of the admission of the delegate from the Northwest Territory after Ohio was admitted as a state, (b) in the history of the admission of the delegate from the Territory of Michigan, after that state had framed a constitution and sent senators and representatives to

Congress. (7). By *congressional concession*, it being undeniable that, although the precedents cited did not at every point cover the present case, inasmuch as in the Ohio case the right of the delegate to a seat was not *formally* passed upon by Congress, and in the Michigan case, the senators and representatives of the state had not yet taken their seats, Congress nevertheless accorded to the territorial delegates their seats in the house in both cases. (8) By *logical law*, graven ineffaceably upon the tablets of every man's mind, viz., that the whole *onus probandi* for the contrary view rests upon those who *deny* to the residuum of Wisconsin Territory its legal existence and the right of its people to their present government and representation; both the presumption in law and the facts in history being *for* the residuum, and not *against* it. (9) By *judicial construction*. The organic act of Congress creating a territory continues in force over the whole territory until repealed by the same legislative authority. The questions of dimension and population are incident, not essential, to the principle involved. Division of territory is not destruction. Moreover, Congress authorizes the division of large territories, into one or more, without detriment to the several parts.

Furthermore, in direct reply to Mr. Boyden's sophistries and sneers: (1) The gentleman from North Carolina was grievously in error when alleging that never, during the first grade of territorial organization, when the legislation is vested in the judges, has Congress granted the right of representation. The history of Michigan confutes the statement. (2) Even were it otherwise, the argument is immaterial and irrelevant, since the residuum of Wisconsin is not here to argue any question of *abstract* right, but to insist upon protection in existing concrete rights, already vested by organic legislation. (3) Taxation of the residuum without representation is not an American idea, as the history of our country shows. (4) To disfranchise from 4,000 to 5,000 people, and disorganize the territory now organized, except in case of war and for the public safety, and leave a loyal, tax-paying population of *bona fide* settlers to the mercy of the marauder and the malefactor, would be an outrage so monstrous upon our boasted popular government as to draw upon us the derision of all despots and the scorn of all nations. (5) And, finally, this is the first time in the history of the United States that any portion of its citizens have been found as humble suppliants, pleading and en-

treating that the general government will not rob them of their legal rights by a false, sophistical, and forced construction of the law of the land.

Such the splendid defense of the rights of the Minnesotians then under the jurisdiction of the Territory of Wisconsin. In an eloquent peroration, Mr. Sibley closed his speech, saying:

"Sir, were this a question, the consequences of which were confined to me personally, the honorable members of this house would not find me here, day after day, wearying their patience by long appeals and explanations. But, believing, as I do, before God, that my case and the question whether there is any law in the Territory of Wisconsin are intimately and indissolubly blended, I trust that the house of representatives will, by its decision of the claim before it, establish the principle, which shall be as a landmark in all coming time, that citizens of this mighty republic, upon whom the rights and immunities of a civil government have been bestowed by act of Congress, shall not be deprived of these without fault or agency of their own, unless under circumstances of grave and imperious necessity, involving the safety and well being of the whole country."<sup>1</sup>

There is no state in the Union that would not have been proud of such a representative as the delegate from Wisconsin, and proud of his maiden effort in Congress. With a statesman-like grasp, comprehension, and logical nerve, and backed by that moral earnestness of conviction which lends to oratory all its power, the case and the cause of his constituents were victoriously pressed. The Committee on Elections felt its force. Mr. Boyden and friends, disappointed indeed at the first appearance of the delegate in the house, awoke at last to learn that the "Indian costume" might be donned figuratively as well as literally, and that it was possible to put on ultramarine and vermilion in a parliamentary way, and that, with parliamentary tomahawk and scalping-knife in hand, "*Walker-in-the-Pines*" could stride successfully for the capillary vertex of his opponent. The result of the speech we shall see. Whoever knows anything of public life, whether in church or state, knows this, that he who stands for a righteous cause against men whose only weapons are injustice, treacherous policy, sophistry, falsehood, prejudice, self-will, and envy, makes no friends among those he has either vanquished, or whose wickedness he has exposed. The baseness of the cause betrays the baseness of the men upholding it, and the sting of conscious defeat or unavoidable exposure but barbs the arrow for a more malignant mission.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 76.

On Tuesday, January 2, 1849, the Hon. Mr. Thompson of Indiana, from the Committee on Elections, submitted to the house a report covering the whole question, its substance being the argument of Mr. Sibley, and accompanied the same by the following resolution:

*"Resolved, That Henry H. Sibley be admitted to a seat on the floor of the house of representatives, as a delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin."*

A minority report was also submitted. Both reports, according to the rules of the house, were laid on the table and ordered to be printed. On January 15, 1849, the reports were taken from the table and read at length to the house, whereupon Mr. Thompson moved the previous question to cut off debate, inasmuch as the reasons *pro* and *con* were fully given in the reports themselves, and it was important that the house should immediately decide the contest one way or the other. The moment could not have been otherwise than of the intensest interest to Mr. Sibley. The previous question was seconded by a vote of yeas 90 to nays 57, and the main question ordered by the speaker of the house. The vote on the main question was taken, and to the joy and relief of the delegate from Wisconsin, it stood, yeas 124 to nays 62, and so, amid mutual congratulations and brightened faces on the one hand, with certain yelpings and scowls on the other, it was

*"Resolved, That Henry H. Sibley be admitted to a seat on the floor of the house of representatives, as a delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin."*

This was victory. It was more. It was tantamount to a decree in advance, that, in spite of opposition, *Minnesota Territory* would be organized before the second session of the Thirtieth Congress should expire. To make assurance doubly sure, Mr. Thompson moved at once a reconsideration of the vote and that that motion should itself be laid upon the table, a parliamentary way of consigning the opposition forever to the tomb of the Capulets. The vote was taken, yeas 111 to nays 82, such men as Dickinson, Giddings, Greeley, Lincoln, Stanton, and Wilmot, voting in the affirmative, while such as Boyden, Cobb, Clingman, Andrew Johnson, Pendleton, and Toombs voted in the negative, Whigs and Democrats commingled on both sides. And so the *Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley* took his seat in the house, crowned with laurels such as no other delegate wore. Had there been telegraphic communi-

cation in those days with St. Paul, a hundred guns would have voiced and celebrated the event. Nor is anything clearer, from the record of the whole procedure, and the temper of the times, than this, that had Mr. Sibley played the rôle of a partisan, or a mere politician, in a case so novel and peculiar, both he and his constituents would have met humiliating defeat. Only a man, *tenax propositi*, and pure from partisan strife, could, under the circumstances, have conducted a cause so grave to a victory so decisive.

It is the rule, in divine Providence, that the greatest movements in the development of society, as in states and nations, have but small beginnings, and that principles the most vital to the well being of man are set in the lowliest surroundings. It was so with Christianity itself. And, evermore, the same Providence puts the right man always in the right place, and at the right time, for his own purposes; a man nurtured unconsciously to himself, by a special previous training, for the mission to which he is appointed, be it that of pulling down or building up. Statesmen do not enough recognize this. And yet it gleams in the histories of prophets and kings of sacred story, and in those of an Alexander and Cæsar, a Napoleon and Washington, a Howard and Wilberforce, a Chatham and a Sumner, in lines of glittering light. Magnitude of territory, population, active business interests, and monetary strength, are not the measure of the magnitude of principle, nor of a people's rights, nor of a nation's glory. What to men seems a "small affair," and is deemed an "unimportant trifle," turns out to be a great affair and a momentous issue. The rendition of the slave Burns, the Dred Scott decision, the first gun fired on Fort Sumter, Hampden's "Ship Money," and the Boston "Tea Party" seemed trifles. But what mighty principles were involved! "Nothing great has great beginnings," says Count de Maistre; "There is not in history a single exception to this law." Pascal, with the hue of genius on his cheek, could say, "The smallest movement in the history of a man affects all nature, even as the whole sea is changed by a pebble. There is no action of man in this life so trivial but that it is the beginning of a chain of consequences so great that none but God can predict the end." How true is this! The word "*Filioque*" split the Greek and Latin churches. Arnold tells us, in his "Lectures on Modern History," that "a glass of water, thrown by the Duchess of



Marlboro' on the silk gown of Mrs. Masham, changed the destinies of Europe," and Pascal, with inimitable wit, has somewhere said, in allusion to Antony, that "if Cleopatra's nose had only been an inch shorter, it would have changed the face of the whole world!" It is true everywhere. Had the cowboy's nod to Bulow at Waterloo been directed toward the forest above Frischemont rather than below Planchenoit, the nineteenth century would have turned upon another axis. Had Napoleon not misunderstood the shake of Lacoste's head, when pointing to Mont St. Jean, Millhaud's and Kellerman's cuirassiers had not been ruined, and Waterloo had not been lost. So it is in the case before us. What greatness Minnesota has already attained unto, and to what greatness she may yet attain, all goes back to that hour when, alone almost, and standing firm to his purpose in defense of the rights of his constituency to their government and representation, the delegate from Wisconsin triumphantly secured the recognition of the same and a title to his seat, and thereby the power to organize *Minnesota Territory* just when it *was* organized, and there and then, to set in motion the forces that since then have crowned her progress with success so wonderful. Only 5,000 people! Only 20,000 square miles! What is Minnesota now! Wise men in coming generations, when reviewing the history of the state, and the history of Mr. Sibley, will decide that one of the greatest acts, if not the greatest, in his whole career was when, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, he lifted the right arm of his manhood in behalf of a defenseless constituency, wrested from the politician's clutch his title to his seat in Congress, and put Minnesota on the path of her imperial development.

How deep the mortification of defeat, and intense the pertinacity of purpose, on the part of his opponents, may be seen in two circumstances, (1) that even after Mr. Sibley's admission to the house on the merits of the majority report, some who voted affirmatively were induced to set themselves right with others, looking out for future interests, by announcing that their vote was given only "in courtesy" of the delegate, but "not in vindication of his constituency;" and (2) that a motion to add an item to the general appropriation bill, to defray the expenses of Wisconsin Territory for the ensuing year, was at a certain juncture "voted down." Such exhibitions of littleness, policy, and selfishness are not always



absent from the councils of the nation or the ways of great men. Pompey prevaricates, Cæsar deceives, Cicero plays timid. The house votes a government, then cuts off the supplies to support it!—and, on the ground that the delegate and his constituents were permitted graciously, “by courtesy,” to be called a territory and be represented, but not by organic right, and constitutional action! The “*tempora*” and the “*mores*” were alike remarkable, due in no small degree to the great questions then agitating the whole country, and affecting those of the organization of territories and their admission into the Union. We shall see this, more, hereafter.

## CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY OF TERRITORIAL POSSESSION AND ADMISSION.—OLD VIRGINIA CHARTER.—ORIGIN OF THE NAME "NORTHWEST TERRITORY."—CONSECRATED TO FREEDOM IN 1787.—THE "LOUISIANA PURCHASE," ACQUIRED 1803.—UNIQUE POSITION OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.—HAD A "DOUBLE MOTHER."—CURIOUS EIGHT-FOLD DIFFERENT JURISDICTIONS.—WESTERN MINNESOTA.—EASTERN MINNESOTA.—MINNESOTA A "RESIDUUM" AT FIRST.—MR. SIBLEY'S RELATION TO THIS "RESIDUUM."—DIFFERENT FAILURES TO ORGANIZE MINNESOTA TERRITORY.—MR. SIBLEY'S SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS, 1848-1849.—STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS.—BILL TO ORGANIZE THE TERRITORY.—LOCATION OF THE CAPITOL.—DOUBLE GRANT OF LAND FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES SECURED BY MR. SIBLEY.—THE SENATE FAVORABLE TO THE ORGANIZATION, THE HOUSE OPPOSED.—SLAVERY QUESTION.—WILMOT PROVISIO.—ORDINANCE OF 1787.—MR. SIBLEY'S ATTITUDE.—HIS WISDOM.—HE TAKES WEBSTER'S GROUND.—ON OTHER GROUNDS RESISTS THE APPLICATION OF THE WILMOT PROVISIO.—THE STRUGGLE IN THE HOUSE.—MR. SIBLEY'S SKILL IN PARLIAMENTARY TACTICS.—ADDRESSES A "CIRCULAR" TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE.—"PREVIOUS QUESTION."—EXCITING SCENES.—APPARENT DEFEAT, YET SEVERAL VICTORIES FOR MR. SIBLEY.—AMENDMENTS.—ONLY FOUR DAYS LEFT!—MR. SIBLEY'S INDOMITABLE PURPOSE AND SUPREME GENERALSHIP.—DOUGLAS TO THE RESCUE!—THE HOUSE HANDICAPPED.—COMPELLED TO CONCUR WITH THE SENATE.—THE BILL PASSED AND MINNESOTA A TERRITORY.—HIGH ENCOMIUM ON MR. SIBLEY.—HIS ARDUOUS LABORS AND FIDELITY.—APPROPRIATIONS SECURED.—SIOUX INDIANS.—REJOICING IN ST. PAUL.—ARRIVAL OF THE STEAM PACKET WITH THE NEWS.—GREAT IMPULSE TO IMMIGRATION.—GOVERNOR RAMSEY.—FORMAL ORGANIZATION.—"FOURTH OF JULY" KEPT.—MOTTO FOR THE TERRITORY.—MR. SIBLEY'S RETURN TO HIS CONSTITUENTS.—ADDRESS.—GENERAL JUBILEE.

AS EVERY special question stands in relation to one more general, the organization of the Territory of Minnesota requires for its proper understanding a brief reference to the history of territorial acquisition, the organization of territories, and the admission of states into the Union, prior to its own date. This compels allusion to what in history are known as "*The Territory of the Northwest*" and the "*Louisiana Purchase*." It will assist the reader if, opening a map of the United States, he directs his eyes to old "Point Comfort" on the Atlantic shore, and, measuring a coast-line two hundred miles north, and another two hundred miles south, of the "Point," thus

fixes the eastern boundary of "*Old Virginia*" the "*Old Dominion*." As to the extent of the Old Dominion, the whole country, unsurveyed, lying back of this coast-line of four hundred miles, even "from sea to sea" and north and northwest of the shore-line, indicated as "up" and "throughout" the unmeasured wilderness, was under the jurisdiction of the "Old Colony." Geography, one of the eyes of History, Chronology, the other, were somewhat defective, not only among the early settlers of Virginia, but even among the ministers at the court of King James. The boundaries of Virginia were therefore quite indefinite, and, to modern eyes, are quite amusing. In other words, by virtue of various royal charters to the London company, in 1606, 1609, 1611, and 1612, *James Rex*, the Virginia settlers came into possession of the above dominion in the New World. The charter of the twenty-third of May, 1609, after defining the sea-shore limits north and south of Point Comfort, proceeds to embrace "*all that space and circuit of land lying from the sea-coast of the precinct aforesaid, up into the land, throughout, from sea to sea, west and northwest.*" That is the origin of the expression "*Northwest Territory.*" No delimitation like this is known anywhere in history, sacred or profane, except it be in that royal charter which cedes to the Messiah "*the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,*" delimiting "*his dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth!*" Less large than this, the "*precinct*" of the Old Dominion was yet quite extensive in its "*circuit*" and its "*space,*" constructively reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and upon the top of that, *everything* "up," "into," and "throughout" the whole continent, "north and northwest." Virginia, modestly, however, never claimed to exercise jurisdiction beyond the Mississippi river, and so, unconsciously, kept her foot from French dominion not less indefinitely great. What she did claim was jurisdiction over the entire region *east of the Mississippi and north and northwest of the Ohio rivers*, and this is technically what is known as "*The Northwestern Territory.*" And by a generosity as great as her modesty, she ceded, March 1, 1784, this vast domain to the United States, forever. And not only so, but, by a nobility of soul great as both her modesty and generosity combined, expressly stipulated that "*slavery shall never be permitted in the territories and states to be formed from it,*" an act, says Mr. Sibley, in his "*Memoranda and*

Notes," "*that was an exhibition of magnanimity and devotion to the public weal, without a parallel in history, and for which all honor is due to the Old Dominion.*"<sup>1</sup> The act, repeated and ratified in the celebrated ordinance of 1787 establishing a territorial government over all this domain, the entire region, as above defined, was forever consecrated to freedom, and out of it have sprung, as if by magic, the great states that now rest upon its bosom, and a *portion* of the State of Minnesota.

Not less important was what is called the "*Louisiana Purchase.*" We have spoken of all *east* of the Mississippi and *north* and *northwest* of the Ohio rivers. We come now to all *west* of the Mississippi and *north* from the Gulf of Mexico, up to the British line, and out of which have sprung, also, as if by magic, the great states of Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, with a *portion* of Louisiana, and a *portion* of Minnesota, and several great territories besides. This region was acquired by the United States, during Jefferson's administration, from the French Government, Napoleon Bonaparte being first consul, the price agreed upon being 60,000,000 francs, or \$11,250,000 of American money. The treaty was ratified October 21, 1803, and formal possession of the whole region taken, in the name of the United States, by a United States commissioner appointed for that purpose, the public proclamation of the cessation of French, and establishment of United States, authority, being made by Governor Claiborne, December 20th of the same year.

It will be seen from the map, that, of all the states formed from the Northwest Territory and the Louisiana purchase, there is but one whose boundary lines, east and west, extend across the Mississippi, viz., the *State of Minnesota*. There are but *two* having *part* of the state on the west and part on the east of the great "Father of Waters," viz., Louisiana at the mouth and Minnesota at the source of the river. But only *one* exists thus, formed out of the Northwest Territory and the Louisiana purchase, which Louisiana was not. Minnesota, therefore, is the offspring of a "double mother."

Curious, also, to an extent most rare, is the history of the successive *eightfold different jurisdictions* to which, in the development of the country, Minnesota became subject. First of all, as to *Western Minnesota*, or the part *west* of the Mississippi, it was (1) under the jurisdiction of the Province of

<sup>1</sup> Memoranda and Notes, p. 12.

Louisiana, 1803; (2) next, under that of the Territory of Indiana, which was temporarily extended across the river, 1804; (3) next, under that of the Territory of Louisiana, 1805; (4) next, under that of the Territory of Missouri, 1812; (5) next, under that of the Territory of Michigan, whose boundary line was extended in 1818 to the Mississippi, and again to the Missouri river, 1834, all lands belonging to the United States west of the Mississippi, east of the Missouri and White Earth rivers, north of the State of Missouri and south of the British line, being thus annexed to the dominion of Michigan and governed from Detroit; (6) next, placed under the jurisdiction of the Territory of Wisconsin, 1836; and, lastly, under that of the Territory of Iowa, 1838, the Mississippi having been made the western limit of Wisconsin when admitted to the Union. Under the jurisdiction of Iowa, Minnesota remained until 1845, when Iowa became a state, a *residuum* of Iowa Territory awaiting its incorporation in the next formed Territory of Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, as to *Eastern Minnesota*, or that part east of the Mississippi river, it was (1) under the jurisdiction of the Territory of the Northwest, by virtue of the ordinance of 1787; (2) next, under that of the Territory of Indiana, 1800; (3) Territory of Michigan, 1805; (4) next, under that of the Territory of Wisconsin, 1836, where it remained until 1848, when Wisconsin was admitted as a state, a *residuum* of the Wisconsin Territory awaiting its incorporation into the next formed Territory of Minnesota, and which was the historic occasion of the commencement of Mr. Sibley's congressional career.

Thus, through *eightfold different* jurisdictions, Minnesota has passed, until becoming herself a territory. As often as a new territory was formed, the *residuum* of the old passed to a new jurisdiction, and as often as a new state was formed out of the new territory, the *residuum* awaited incorporation into the territory next in order. The first contest ever made in the history of the country for the recognition of the organic rights of the *residuum, as such*, was made by Mr. Sibley, who himself—to use his own words—was “successively a citizen of Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota territories, without changing his (my) residence at Mendota.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See U. S. Charter and Constitution, Part 1, p. 982.

<sup>2</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll. Soc., Vol. III, pp. 2, 265.

Out of the Northwest Territory and the Louisiana purchase were formed many territories which have already become magnificent states. They need not here be enumerated. When, however, Wisconsin became a state, May 29, 1848, her western boundary was fixed by act of Congress at the St. Croix river, as heretofore stated, and no positive act of Congress legislating any special provision for the protection of the inhabitants of the *residuum* between the St. Croix and the Mississippi they were left unprotected, unless the old government continued still in force west of the St. Croix, and unless the legal existence of the *residuum* should be recognized by Congress as unextinguished even after the admission of the state. This question was decided through the magnificent championship of the people's rights by Mr. Sibley, and the conquest of his seat in the house of representatives, as a "duly elected delegate from Wisconsin Territory."

The 5,000 people covering the 20,000 square miles alluded to, and among whom were men of mark, such as Henry Hastings Sibley, Henry M. Rice, Franklin Steele, Morton S. Wilkinson, Henry L. Moss, John McKusick, Joseph R. Brown, Martin McLeod, William R. Marshall, and others, were not content to abide under a narrowed jurisdiction, much less a doubtful one, and remain as a discarded fragment of the last formed state of the Union. *They proposed the organization of another territory, the Territory of Minnesota.* It was the whole objective ultimate point of the contest waged as to the right of Mr. Sibley to a seat in Congress. Should a second bill fail, as the first one had done before Mr. Sibley's advent to the house, yet the *recognition of the residuum* as a legal existence would be of value to the settlers west of the St. Croix. Should the seat be won, the second bill was sure to succeed through the personal influence of Mr. Sibley and his friends, among whom were Henry M. Rice and Franklin Steele, who, in conjunction with Mr. Sibley, labored most earnestly to secure the passage of the bill.

Mr. Sibley's seat once won, he turned his whole attention to the accomplishment of the ulterior object of his advent to Washington, viz., the organization of Minnesota Territory. All the more did he feel the importance of success in this undertaking, inasmuch as a bill had already been introduced to this end, in 1846, to meet only with failure, though reported back to the house favorably by Hon. Stephen A. Douglas,

then a member of the house, and chairman of its Committee on Territories.<sup>1</sup> And, yet again, the disposition of certain members of the house, after voting affirmatively for the admission of Mr. Sibley as a delegate from Wisconsin, to qualify their vote by the "*courtesy*" explanation, omened no good to the enterprise in which he was engaged. With laudable tact and wise statesmanship, therefore, Mr. Sibley personally persuaded Mr. Douglas himself, now in the senate, and chairman of the senate's Committee on Territories, to introduce a bill for the organization of the Territory of Minnesota, to which Mr. Douglas consented, and gave notice, on the first day of the session, December 4, 1848, of his purpose to do so.<sup>2</sup> This bill, in connection with others organizing the territories of Nebraska and New Mexico, was recommitted to the Committee on Territories in the senate, December 20, and on January 8, 1849, was made the special order of the day. On the eighteenth, the senate concurred in the amendments of the committee, Senator Butler of South Carolina voting for it, though deeming it a violation of the ordinance of 1787, which limited the number of states to be formed out of the Northwest Territory to five, while Senator Westcott of Florida deemed two judges sufficient for the territory, the amendment being concurred in, the number, however, afterward increased to three. On the nineteenth day of January, the further consideration of the bill having been postponed to that date, the bill was, after further discussion, read a third time, and passed. Thus far Mr. Sibley was generously and kindly favored in his effort by Mr. Douglas, who had permitted him to make certain changes in the bill in order the more completely to meet the wishes of his constituents. Chief among these changes was (1) the *retention of the name "Minnesota," as found in the original bill of 1846, introduced by the Hon. Morgan L. Martin*, then delegate from Wisconsin Territory, *instead of the name "Itasca,"* which Mr. Douglas preferred; (2) the *substitution of "St. Paul" as the capital of the territory, and capital of the future state, instead of "Mendota,"* which, again, Mr. Douglas preferred, deeming the west side of the Mississippi, the confluence of the Mississippi and the Minnesota rivers, and "Pilot Knob," at Mendota, the place, of all others, most appropriate for the capital and the capitol buildings; and (3) *a double grant*

<sup>1</sup> See Neill's History of Minnesota, p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> See Congressional Globe, Thirtieth Congress, Second Session, p. 1.



of land, two sections, viz., 16 and 36, instead of one, viz., 16, as reported in the original bill, for schools in every township of the new territory. Referring to this last and important benefit to the people of Minnesota for all time, and from which a revenue by the sale of lands has already reached the sum of over \$4,000,000, Mr. Sibley remarks, that it was the first concession of the kind ever made to any territory east of the Rocky Mountains, Oregon alone in 1848 having, when organized, received a like double grant for like purposes. To use his own words when speaking of this, he says: "I succeeded in obtaining the same for Minnesota, thus securing, for the first time, east of the Rocky Mountains, *one-eighteenth of the entire public domain*, in a newly organized territory, for schools. It is not probable that so munificent a grant could have been secured if *the impression had not been general in Congress that the soil and climate were alike unsuited to the production of cereals and vegetables, and the land therefore of little value!*" This is not the place to turn aside and dwell upon the disinterestedness and loyalty of Mr. Sibley, who, by yielding to the preference of Mr. Douglas, could have speculated an immense fortune into his pocket, "Mendota" being his place of residence for many years, and freighted with large business interests of his own. It is enough in passing to record the judgment of one well able to judge, and say that "*it was only by the unbending integrity and honesty of General Sibley insisting upon the original program that the capital was saved to St. Paul.*"<sup>1</sup>

If, however, the senate was favorable to the bill for organizing Minnesota Territory, not so the house. When the bill as passed by the senate came to the house its Committee on Territories loaded it with amendments, such as (1) changing the boundary line, (2) causing the act to take effect March 10, 1849, instead of on the day of its passage, in order to preclude the president, Mr. Polk, from making the appointments; besides other amendments seeking (1) to incorporate the "Wilmot Proviso," and (2) to intrude special clauses from the "Ordinance of 1787" excluding slavery, both which were utterly superfluous, and meant only to provoke protracted debate to the injury of the bill; in short, every means possible to delay, embarrass, obstruct, and defeat, the bill. Against all these Mr. Sibley resolutely set his face, determined from the first to move the "previous question."

<sup>1</sup> Address by Hon. Charles E. Flandrau to the Pioneer Association, 1886, p. 12.

"I was averse," he says, "to these changes because we had already sufficient territory without extending our line to the Missouri river; and, as to the appointments, I stated that Mr. Polk could exercise the right to nominate two to three officers, and that under any circumstances the proposed amendment was a breach of delicacy and propriety. I resisted the Wilmot proviso, as it was *wholly superfluous, the introduction of slavery being already prohibited by the ordinance of 1787, on the east of the Mississippi, and on the west side by the act of 1819, establishing the Missouri line.* The proposition was therefore voted down in committee, but brought into the house as an amendment by the minority of the committee, and only kept from being adopted and producing a fierce and angry discussion which would have resulted in the loss of the bill, by my moving and refusing to withdraw the previous question which cut off all amendments. On the other points I was overruled in committee."<sup>1</sup>

Here is the place to consider, but a moment, the relation of Mr. Sibley to the great domestic question of slavery which then convulsed the whole country, and the propriety of his resistance to the introduction of the "*Wilmot Proviso*" into the bill for the organization of Minnesota Territory. First of all, it was not as a party man, Whig or Democrat, he was elected as a delegate to Congress, no political party of any kind having any existence in the territory at that time. In the next place, every foot of ground in the entire public domain, state and territorial, had already been fixed for slavery or freedom by solemn federal guarantees and treaties, and by irrepealable law beyond the action of Congress, if public faith were to be kept inviolate. Thirdly, the commitment of Mr. Sibley's mixed constituency to one or other side of the great question then pending would have been without authority, and awakened in them at that time the very strife his wisdom deprecated. Lastly, his own commitment of himself by participation in the heated contests that arose upon that question would have made the organization of the territory an impossibility, and postponed the object of his mission, it might have been, for many years to come. It was enough of risk to meet the opposition that first confronted him by prejudice against the "pine-log, hyperborean region" whence he came. But to enter the lists upon the slavery question, in a Congress almost equally divided, what reasonable hope could be indulged of even the least measure of success in the work intrusted to him? The non-possession of his seat had been the forfeit of his folly had he acted otherwise than as he did, and with that disaster all

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 64.

else had failed. But beyond this, his wisdom and statesmanship displayed themselves herein, that the proposed attachment of the "Wilmot Proviso" was, to use his own words, "*wholly surperfluous.*" It could accomplish nothing. It could have no effect upon the territory which had not already super-vened by virtue of climatic law, Nature's own decree, the ordinance of 1787, and the Missouri line. The only effect of a permitted debate upon the introduction of that "proviso" into the Minnesota bill would have been the wreck of the bill itself amid the surges of a violent discussion which the power to carry the "previous question" alone prevented;—a power gained only by "masterly inactivity" in reference to the party politics then raging. And the judgment and real statesmanship of Mr. Sibley were, afterward, abundantly confirmed by the words of one whose superior the American nation has never known. It was Webster who said, in his great speech of March 7, 1850, upon the "Compromise Bill" before Congress, and in reference to New Mexico, "New Mexico is fixed for freedom, to as many persons as shall live there, by a law more irrepealable than that which attaches to the right of holding slaves in Texas. I will go further. I will say that, if a resolution or a law were now before us to provide a territorial government for New Mexico, I would not vote to put any prohibition into it whatever. *The use of such a prohibition would be idle as it respects any effect it would have upon the territory;* and I would not take the pains to reaffirm an ordinance of nature, or to re-enact the will of God. *And I would put in no Wilmot proviso.*"<sup>1</sup> On grounds additional to that of "climate," or "law of nature," viz.: on the ground of the "Missouri Compromise of 1820" excluding slavery north of the line of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes, and on the ground of the "Great Ordinance of 1787" consecrating the whole Northwest Territory to freedom, forever, Mr. Sibley resisted the device of the Free Soilers in Congress, *either* to prevent the organization of the Territory of Minnesota, *or* compel the insertion of the proviso. Minnesota, crowned with snowy plumes, and guarded by two irrepealable federal ordinances, did not need the "saving grace" of an instrument which even the great Webster, who perfectly approved its doctrine, did not hesitate to call "a piece of legislation not only *entirely*

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<sup>1</sup> Congressional Globe, Thirtieth Congress, Second Session, p. 581.

*useless, but entirely senseless.*" The impartial judgment of all Minnesotians will commend, while the state endures, the wisdom of Mr. Sibley's course in this whole matter.

The twenty-second of February was a field-day for Minnesota in the house of representatives, and the beginning of the end of the long and weary struggle of Mr. Sibley in behalf of his constituents, and their dearest wish. The time had come for the final test of mettle, and down to the closing day of the session it was one continuous battle in the house and out of it, earnest, intense, and resolute on both sides, as was ever fought on any question. It was, however,—save one temporary check,—a succession of victories for the "delegate from Wisconsin." The fortune that perched beside his eagle-plume when he entered the house to claim his seat did not forsake him now that he had honored and adorned it. "Mr. Sibley moved that the rules of the house be suspended, to enable him to submit a motion that the committee of the whole upon the state of the Union be discharged from the consideration of the bill from the senate to establish the territorial government of Minnesota, so as to bring the bill directly before the house, and put it on its final passage."<sup>1</sup> That was the bugle-note for the last conflict. The members were scattered about the house, no quorum present, and a call of the house being made, one hundred and forty-five now answering to their names, the vote was taken, and the "rules were suspended, yeas 100 to nays 16, and the committee of the whole were discharged from further consideration of the bill." Mr. Sibley then rose and moved the "*previous question*," appealed to, most earnestly, by many representatives sitting near him, to withdraw his motion, but which he refused to do, "turning a deaf ear to all their entreaties and incurring the ire of all who were inimical to the bill."<sup>2</sup> He responded that "with all deference to those gentlemen," he "must insist on the previous question."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Rockwell of Massachusetts inquires what has become of the amendment he offered, and what the effect of the previous question upon it, and is answered by cries of "Order," and calls for the "Question," Speaker Winthrop ruling adversely to the gentleman. Mr. Rockwell appeals again, in vain, to Mr. Sibley, several members

<sup>1</sup> Congressional Globe, Thirtieth Congress, Second Session, p. 581.

<sup>2</sup> Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Globe, Ibid., p. 581.

privately encouraging Mr. Sibley not to yield, Mr. Cobb of Georgia—once opposed but now friendly—telling Mr. Sibley, *sotto voce*, that “to yield is to insure the loss of the bill.” Already, on the seventeenth, foreseeing the danger and the struggle, Mr. Sibley, with great tact, caused a circular to be placed on the desk of every member of the house, asking, in courteous and dignified terms, their kind assistance in the approaching contest.<sup>1</sup> And it had its effect. Mr. Cobb calls Mr. Rockwell to order, and the speaker sustains Mr. Cobb. Mr. Boyden of North Carolina now rises to a point of order, viz., that Mr. Sibley has “no right to move the previous question, inasmuch as he is only a delegate and not a representative.” Mr. Cobb now calls Mr. Boyden to order, and the speaker sustains Mr. Sibley. Mr. Boyden, excited, appeals to the house from the decision of the chair, whereupon the house sustains the speaker by a unanimous vote, Mr. Boyden’s solitary “No” sounding dismal and bereaved, to the infinite amusement of the house. Mr. Smith of Indiana suddenly feels in need of information, and inquires, with anxious look, what has become of the bevy of amendments that attended the last advent of the bill into the house, and if the previous question cuts them off. The speaker decides that all amendments legitimately introduced will be respected, notwithstanding the previous question, and all others will be shown the back door. Whereupon Mr. Levin of Pennsylvania rises to a point of order, and desires to be illuminated on the question “whether the extension of the right of suffrage to aliens is not a violation of the Constitution of the United States.” The speaker imparts the necessary light by informing Mr. Levin that his “point of order” is “*not* a point of order,” but a question of construction and interpretation, and rules that all further interruptions must cease, and the question be taken. The previous question then began to be taken, yeas 81, at which point Mr. Rockwell is up again, before the

<sup>1</sup> *Note*.—The following is the circular:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SATURDAY, February 17, 1849.

SIR: It is not probable that the bill for the organization of Minnesota Territory will be reached in the order of business before the committee of the whole. As a failure of this bill would be a most serious calamity to the people of that territory, I take the liberty to appeal to your kind feelings, in their behalf, to sustain me in a motion I shall make on Monday to suspend the rules, that the bill may be taken up and passed. It is not probable that any debate will take place upon it. I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,  
H. H. SIBLEY.

nays were heard, demanding tellers for the vote, whereupon, the tellers having been appointed, and calling the roll, the vote stood, yeas 95 to nays 71, and so the previous question was *seconded*, the speaker calling out at once, "Shall the main question be now put?" At this juncture, Mr. Giddings of Ohio (with the "Wilmot Proviso" in his hand) rises to inquire if the main question is *ordered* "can Mr. Rockwell (who had the ordinance of 1787 in his head) offer his amendment," the speaker deciding "*No.*" Mr. Giddings, however, has yet another question to propound, viz., if the main question is *not* ordered, "will the bill be open to amendment," to which the speaker answered "*Yes,*" Mr. Giddings then expressing the hope that the previous question may incur a summary disaster, and without delay. The Hon. Mr. Gentry of Tennessee now inquires, if the main question is defeated, "will the bill go over till to-morrow," and the speaker relieves, affirmatively, his solicitude. Then the Hon. Daniel Gott of New York, unlike Daniel of old, complains that his memory is weak, and importunes the house just to hear Mr. Rockwell read his amendment one moment, *pro bono publico*, the speaker deciding that Mr. Gott's weak memory is not in order, and calling out, "Shall the main question be now put?" to which the house responded, yeas 102, nays 99, *a close call*, only three votes difference between the sides, but Mr. Sibley and the bill still ahead.

The first business now, according to parliamentary rule, being the consideration of the legitimately made *amendments*, that is, those reported by the Committee on Territories, the first one, viz., the one *striking out* the words "on the passage of this act," and *substituting* the words "on March 10, 1849," as the date when the bill, if passed, should take effect, was *lost*, yeas 97, nays 104. Another victory for Mr. Sibley; for the senate never would concur in an indirect insult to the outgoing president of the United States, by depriving him of his right to make appointments of territorial officers for Minnesota, March 4, 1849. The Hon. Mr. Schenck of Ohio then moved that the whole bill be laid upon the table, a device not infrequent when much business pressed the house near the close of its term. The game was unsuccessful, notwithstanding the Hon. Mr. Haralsen's prayer for "more light," like the cry of Ajax in the gloom of battle. The motion being put, the ordered yeas and nays fired back, yeas 88, nays 106, and



so Schenck's motion was triumphantly *lost*. Amendments from 3 to 10 inclusive, all harmless and appropriate, are carried, *nem. con.*, after which 11 and 12, decreeing \$20,000 for the capitol buildings and \$5,000 for a library, for the use of the officers of the territory, are stricken out.<sup>1</sup> Again a rally is made, and, as a thirteenth amendment, it is proposed to insert "March 10, 1849," as the day when the bill, if passed, shall take effect, whereupon the Hon. Mr. Kaufmann of Texas inquires of the speaker if the motion to insert March 10, 1849, is not a palpable and intended insult to the president of the United States. The speaker replies that he is not in possession of any satisfactory information on the subject. The vote is taken, and the amendment *agreed to*, yeas 101, nays 95, a majority of six *against* the bill, and insuring its absolute defeat, unless the house should recede from the amendment. Then, as if the fate of the bill were decided, the Hon. Mr. Evans of Maryland rises to a point of order, viz., that the "Texas District Collection Bill" ranks all other business, and therefore has precedence, the speaker informing the gentleman that all other business, especially the Minnesota bill, ranks that. At this point, the general calendar is taken up, and the house ceases from its territorial labors till February 28th, or just four days before the close of the session.

There are times when even the hearts of the bravest sink within them, and the agony of the spirit betrays itself in the wan countenance and the downcast eye. There are times when, after a severe struggle, and mental tension to the utmost, a cause seems hopelessly lost, and it is impossible to renew the effort in its behalf. But Mr. Sibley's indomitable purpose never left him, nor did his courage fail him, nor was his wisdom lacking. By a stroke of true generalship, presaging military honors upon another field, he devised a plan whereby, putting himself in possession of the power to control a measure then pending in Congress for the organization of the

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<sup>1</sup> The rules of the house required all appropriations to be first considered in committee of the whole, and the time was too limited to allow the house to resolve itself into such committee. This untoward event was counteracted subsequently, however, by taking up from the filed calendar a private bill entitled, "*A Bill for the relief of Mr. James Norris*," to which the house attached the words, "*and for other purposes*." Inasmuch as the rule of the house did not require appropriations in *private* bills to be referred to a committee of the whole, the motion was made, and carried, to add a section to that bill providing for "*the usual appropriations to defray the expenses of Minnesota Territory*!" Thus the first money ever appropriated by Congress for the benefit of Minnesota was a hurried and amusing addendum to a private bill for the relief of some humble individual unknown to Minnesota, even to this day.



“Department of the Interior,” he could either command the success of the Minnesota bill, by compelling the house to recede from its obnoxious amendment, or defeat a scheme dear to the ambition of the leaders in the house, and from whose accomplishment they expected great pecuniary emolument and personal preferment. The bill for the organization of the interior department of the general government had already passed the house, and was now in the hands of the senate, utterly indifferent whether it should succeed or fail by the vote of that body. The Democratic senators were not especially anxious to favor a measure providing new offices for their political opponents, or conferring new powers on the incoming administration of the president-elect, General Zachary Taylor, adverse to their own policy. Repairing to the senate at once, where the Minnesota bill had gone as amended, and where the bill for the department of the interior awaited the final action of the senate, Mr. Sibley informed his personal friends of what had been done in the house, and requested aid to help him secure the success of the bill organizing the Territory of Minnesota. Senator Douglas, chairman of the senate’s Committee on Territories, summoned his senatorial friends together, and, after a conference with Mr. Sibley, authorized him to state to the Whig leaders of the house that unless the house should *recede* from its thirteenth amendment to the Minnesota bill, and so concur with the senate adverse to that amendment, the bill for the organization of the interior department would be ignominiously defeated. On the other hand, should the house be pleased to concur with the senate in this respect, the senate would certainly concur with the house in reference to the bill for the interior. It was a new and startling revelation, a flank movement, at a late hour in the day, the execution of which was assured to them by testimonies, and, most of all, by the firm word of Mr. Sibley, whose personal asseveration no one dared to question. In short, Mr. Sibley now held in his own hand the power to pass the Minnesota bill or defeat the organization of the interior department of the general government. It was an Archimedean lever, with the upper house of Congress as its fulcrum, and the lower house as the obstacle to be turned upside down. The calm consciousness of success and the sunshine that beamed in the face of the delegate from Wisconsin as he imparted the cheering intelligence, produced the salutary

effect of profound conviction among the magnates of the hall of representatives. The twenty-eighth of February came, and found Mr. Sibley in his seat, ready either to win his own cause or inflict defeat on that of its foes. The Minnesota bill had returned to the house, the senate concurring in all the house amendments to the bill, save the thirteenth. The main question now is, "*Shall the house recede from the thirteenth amendment?*" Mr. Sibley rose and again demanded the previous question. It was seconded, and the main question was ordered, the house adjourning. The final action was taken on the third day of March, the day the last before the adjournment of Congress. Once more on that day Mr. Sibley is found at his post, rises, and again with unflinching purpose calls for the previous question, which is seconded, and the main question, heard for the last time in the hall of representatives, "*Shall the house recede?*" is now finally ordered, carried, moved to be reconsidered, and that motion itself laid on the table, the house *receding from the thirteenth amendment, and so concurring with the senate, no voice opposing!*

Thus, after two among the severest struggles in Congress, one at the opening and one at the close of the session, and a hand-to-hand contest all the way between, was Minnesota organized as a new territory, March 3, 1849, and put in possession of a separate government almost equal to that enjoyed by the people of the states. The relief experienced by Mr. Sibley and the faithful friends from Minnesota who co-operated with him may well be imagined. It was a time for jubilee. And the justifiable good-natured exultation of the tireless, faithful, and victorious delegate from Wisconsin over the adversaries of the Minnesota bill may be repeated, in his own words, without offense to his modesty: "I tell you, I walked, that day, with the highest head and the lightest heart and the freest step and best face of any man in the crowd, from the house of representatives over to the capitol!" And well he might, for, in the words of one of the most influential journals of the present day, reviewing the career of Mr. Sibley, "*It is scarcely possible that any other man in the Northwest could have attained the same result at that time. By his finished manners, excellent sense, and knowledge of men, he speedily made friends, and succeeded in accomplishing what every man regarded as an impossibility.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chicago Times, January 30, 1886.

Laborious, however, as was the task of drafting and securing the passage of the Minnesota bill, still other important duties and services were discharged by Mr. Sibley in the interest of his constituents during this session of Congress. The removal of the land office from Wisconsin to Stillwater was effected, after a strong resistance made to this project by the members of the Wisconsin legislature protesting, through Senator Walker, against its transfer outside the limits of the state. This resistance, however, was at last withdrawn, by means of the establishment of an additional land office for Wisconsin within its own boundaries. A weekly mail service, by steam packet, was also granted by the postmaster general, at the repeated and earnest solicitations of Mr. Sibley, who secured the assistance herein of the representatives from Wisconsin and Iowa. He furthermore introduced a resolution into the house, which was adopted, whereby the house instructed the Committee on the Post Office to establish a post route from Fort Snelling to Fort Gaines, and also to instruct the Committee on Indian Affairs to extend the United States laws over the Northwest Indian tribes, for the prevention of murder and other crimes of which they were habitually guilty. In addition, he drafted a bill, which was introduced into the house by the Hon. Robert Smith, appropriating \$12,000 for the construction of a road from the St. Louis river of Lake Superior to St. Paul and to Point Douglas, via Marine Mills and Stillwater, besides devoting his attention to various individual and other claims. Still further, he presented to the house a memorial, signed by a large number of Sioux mixed-bloods who had lost a part, or else all, of the amount allowed them under the treaty of 1837, asking the same to be refunded. In company with this he also presented another memorial, viz., that of the sufferers who, by act of military violence at Fort Snelling, had been driven from their homes on the military reserve. Both these claims for compensation and redress he asserted to be just, securing their reference to the proper committees for examination. For want of time to push these measures through Congress, during the present session, final action was necessarily postponed to a future day. In the interest of the Sioux mixed-bloods who desired to dispose of their lands at Lake Pepin, he waited upon the secretary of war and commissioner of Indian affairs a number of times, to procure, if possible, their co-operation and concurrence herein,

but was unsuccessful on the ground that a new administration was about to assume power, and certain legal formalities were wanting, for the rectification of which no time permitted. In conclusion, Mr. Sibley labored to procure the addition of an item to the general appropriation bill to defray the expenses of the treaty with the mixed-blood owners of the Lake Pepin tract of land, and also for negotiating a treaty with the Sioux Indians, as also to meet expenses of the treaty of pacification between the Sioux, Chippewas, and Winnebagoes. The general appropriation bill, however, was too far advanced to allow the insertion of the application, which failed for want of time to consider the items.

Such was the work of the delegate from the *residuum* of Wisconsin Territory. It would be difficult to find in the history of delegates anywhere more steadfast devotion, or more upright, self-denying, assiduous toil in behalf of any constituency, or truer sympathy with fellow men whom he deemed to be wronged, savage and semi-savage as they were. Exhausted by his labors, and the second session of the Thirtieth Congress closed, it remained for him to return to the bosom of his friends in the far Northwest and give an account of what he had accomplished, and what he had attempted.

Nearly three years had elapsed from the first movement to organize the Territory of Minnesota to the auspicious day when, by the fidelity, skill, and personal presence of Mr. Sibley, aided by devoted friends, not only in Congress but from Minnesota, it was triumphantly effected. The joy at the reception of the news in Minnesota, that at length its territorial organization was a living fact, may indeed be imagined without fear of exaggeration. The Rev. Dr. E. D. Neill, writing from personal knowledge, says, in his "History of Minnesota," when adverting to this event, "More than a month after the adjournment of Congress, just at eve, on the ninth of April, amid terrific peals of thunder and torrents of rain, the *weekly steam packet*, the *first* to force its way through the icy barrier of Lake Pepin, rounded the rocky point, *whistling loud and long*, as if the bearer of glad tidings. Before she was safely moored to the landing, the shouts of the excited villagers announced that *there was a Territory of Minnesota and that St. Paul was the seat of government!* Every successive steamboat arrival poured out on the landing men big with hope,

and anxious to do something to mould the future of the new state."<sup>1</sup> Nine days later, April 28th, the first printing press entered the territory under the care and conduct of James M. Goodhue, a lawyer by profession, and a graduate of Amherst College, the "*pioneer press*" of the state, whose witty editor conceived that the title, "*The Epistle of St. Paul*," would not be a bad name for the new sheet. A month later, May 27th, the Hon. Alexander Ramsey, governor of the territory,—appointed by President Zachary Taylor, March 19, 1849, President Polk having with rare magnanimity declined to nominate any of the territorial officers,—arrived at St. Paul, and in default of accommodation at the crowded public houses, became, with his family, the guest of Mr. Sibley until June 26th. June 1, 1849, the governor formally issued his proclamation of the organization of the territory, requiring obedience to its laws, and ten days later a second proclamation dividing the territory into three judicial districts, over which presided the newly appointed judges, to-wit, Chief Justice Aaron Goodrich and Associate Judges David Cooper and Bradley B. Meeker; the county of St. Croix being the First Judicial district, Stillwater the county seat; the Second district having its county seat at the Falls of St. Anthony; the Third at Mendota; *fifteen lawyers in the territory, and within a year, one hundred cases on the docket!*<sup>2</sup> In what manner the following Fourth of July was celebrated by the new-born citizens of our glorious country, may well be conceived. One of the noble pioneers of that hour, deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and unfamiliar, perhaps, with any other civilization than what the early Western wilds had shown, was completely carried away by the reading of the "Declaration of Independence," and, as the crowd dispersed, declared that, not intending offense to any of the other speakers, he regarded it as the "ablest effort" that had been made upon that memorable occasion! Characteristic of Mr. Sibley, was his choice of the Earl of Dunraven's motto, viz., "*Quæ sursum volo videre*," "I would see what is above," as the motto for the territorial seal. Through a blunder of the engraver, which rendered the motto unintelligible (*Quo sursum velo videre*) it was laid aside for the less impressive, though beautiful, one, "*L'Etoile du Nord*," "The Star of the North,"—

<sup>1</sup> Neill's Hist. of Minnesota, p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> Paper by Justice Goodrich, Minn. Hist. Coll., Vol. I, p. 80.

"the North Star" being, however, already emblazoned on the escutcheon of the State of Maine. The historian of Minnesota expresses the hope that "some future legislature may direct the first motto to be restored, and correctly engraved."<sup>1</sup>

With just pride could Mr. Sibley, upon his return to the territory which his own skill had done so much to organize, meet his old friends, and in public assembly, convened to greet him, rehearse the labors of the past winter in their behalf, and recite the work that was done. *Wisconsin Territory was now no more, and its delegate, as such, had passed out of existence.* But Henry Hastings Sibley still lived, and could personally give an account of his stewardship. In an "*Address of Henry H. Sibley of Minnesota, to the People of Minnesota Territory,*" he renews the history of the whole struggle in their behalf, explains the character of his own acts, gives the reasons for his own conduct, narrates the mortifications and vexatious delays to which he was subjected while claiming his seat, unfolds various devices whereby the bill for the organization of the territory was sought to be wrecked, announces the final victory, and honors the names of the men who stood so nobly by him in Congress. Eminent among these were the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, the Hon. Abraham Lincoln, the gifted speaker of the house, Hon. Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts, but for whose rulings the bill had perished under the blows of an angry contention, the Hons. Messrs. Dodge of Wisconsin, father and son, and others equally generous in their support, both in the senate and house of representatives. With rare sagacity and wise emphasis, Mr. Sibley pressed upon his constituents the importance of avoiding everything like "party politics" in the inception now of their territorial career, assuring them that had he played the rôle of a partisan in Congress their great ambition had forever been frustrated. A Democrat himself, of the old-fashioned type, and of which the country might well be proud, and working for a territory which his wisdom well knew would ere long become a state, and under the tendencies and pressure of the times, Republican, in all probability, he yet deemed it his duty to throw from his mind and eject from his policy everything that might endanger the success of his great enterprise. "*My rule,*" said he, "*was to keep my ears open and my mouth shut, whenever questions were discussed of a party character.*"

<sup>1</sup> Neill, *Ibid.*, p. 516.



And this he persisted in doing, even under the greatest temptation and provocation to act otherwise, and while suffering from the most malignant and envenomed personal attacks of mere politicians with whom he never was a favorite.

Grandly did he close his "*Address to the People*," carrying even into its dying cadences the tones of high dignity and lofty moral bearing that belong only to the noble mind, the impressive speaker, and the true patriot:

"Minnesota," said he, "now occupies no unenviable position. The government granted us secures us all in the full possession of privileges almost, if not wholly, equal to those enjoyed by the people of the states. With a legislative council elected from among our own citizens, our own judicial tribunals, a large appropriation for the construction of public buildings, and for a public library, with ample provision also for defraying the expenses of the territorial government, and with the right of representation in Congress, surely we can have no cause of complaint, so far as our political situation is concerned. It is for ourselves, by a wise, careful, and practical legislation, and by improving the advantages we now possess to keep inviolate the public faith, and hasten the time when the star of Minnesota, which now but twinkles in the political firmament, shall shine brilliantly in the constellation of our confederated states. Fellow citizens, my task is finished, and while you have my heartfelt thanks for the honor bestowed upon me in electing me your delegate, I now give back the trust, *with a full consciousness that I have allowed no selfish feeling to interfere with my public duties*, but that, on the contrary, I have labored constantly, zealously, faithfully, with the poor talents God has bestowed upon me, in advancing all the great and important interests of our common country."<sup>1</sup>

Such the calm victory and proud triumph permitted to the "delegate from Wisconsin." With what anxiety had he started for Washington! With what gladness did he return to his home! Nor will true-hearted Minnesotians in generations to come forget to erect a monument of gratitude in honor of the man—the one man—who, alone of all men, in that important hour, could have achieved for them, and with them for himself, a success so brilliant and effective, against odds so many and so great, and obstacles in politics and the temper of the times wellnigh invincible.

<sup>1</sup> Address, etc., etc., pp. 4, 5.



## CHAPTER V.

THE THIRTY-FIRST CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION, 1849-50.—MR. SIBLEY UNANIMOUSLY RETURNED TO CONGRESS BY THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.—FIRST DELEGATE FROM THE TERRITORY OF MINNESOTA.—FREE FROM PARTY TRAMMELS.—A DEMOCRAT IN HIS PRINCIPLES.—HIS DEEP INTEREST IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE TERRITORY.—FIRST FOREMAN OF THE FIRST GRAND JURY IN MINNESOTA.—HIS SECOND APPEARANCE IN WASHINGTON.—INTENSE SLAVERY AGITATION.—COMPOSITION OF THE THIRTY-FIRST CONGRESS.—STRUGGLE TO ELECT A SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE.—ROLL CALLED SIXTY-THREE TIMES.—DIFFICULT TASK OF MR. SIBLEY.—THE WANTS OF MINNESOTA.—REMARKABLE AMOUNT OF PRAYING.—MEMORIAL OF THE LEGISLATURE ASKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, PRESENTED TO CONGRESS BY MR. SIBLEY.—PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INTERESTS.—BILLS FOR ROADS, POST ROADS, ELECTIVE JUDICIARY, PUNISHMENT OF CRIMES, EXTENSION OF LAWS OVER THE INDIANS, INCREASE OF MILITARY FORCE, PROTECTION OF THE SETTLERS, OPPOSED BY MR. ROOT OF OHIO.—BILL FOR SURVEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI.—BILL TO PROLONG THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION.—THE SCHOOL LANDS.—MORE APPROPRIATIONS.—PUBLIC BUILDINGS, CAPITOL, PENITENTIARY.—MR. SIBLEY ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE.—THE UTAH AND NEW MEXICO QUESTIONS.—DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF DELEGATES.—THE GOVERNMENT'S INDIAN POLICY.—SYNOPSIS OF HIS ARGUMENT AS TO UTAH AND NEW MEXICO.—ALSO AS TO THE RIGHTS OF DELEGATES ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE.—THE RED MAN'S FRIEND IN CONGRESS.—THE AMENDMENT TO THE SEVENTH CENSUS BILL IN BEHALF OF THE INDIAN.—GREAT SPEECH OF MR. SIBLEY FOR THE INDIAN.—CIVILIZATION OR EXTERMINATION.—NEMESIS FOREBODED.—ELOQUENT ABRAIGNMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT.—THE TRUE POLICY AND REMEDY.—THRILLING PERORATION.—THE MINNESOTA MASSACRE PREDICTED.—WIPES HIS HANDS OF ALL RESPONSIBILITY.—HON. MR. MASON'S REPLY.—MR. SIBLEY'S KEEN RETORT.—TRIBUTE TO THE INDIAN.

THE THIRTY-FIRST CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION, 1851.—MR. SIBLEY'S FRIENDS IN THE SENATE.—BILL TO PROMOTE INDIAN CIVILIZATION.—LEASE OF THE SCHOOL LANDS FOR ENDOWMENT OF MINNESOTA UNIVERSITY, AND FOR MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH.—REDUCTION OF FORT SNELLING RESERVATION.—BRIDGE ACROSS THE MISSISSIPPI.—SECURING THE RIGHTS OF SETTLERS.—APPROPRIATIONS TO REMOVE OBSTRUCTIONS TO NAVIGATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI.—DEBATE AS TO THE REDUCTION OF THE FORT SNELLING RESERVATION.—GROUNDS OF RESISTANCE TO THE BILL.—MR. SIBLEY'S REPLY.—WARM DEBATE ON THE QUESTION OF GIVING THE SCHOOL LANDS IN CHARGE TO THE LEGISLATURE.—THE OBJECTIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE.—BURDEN OF REPLY.—MR. SIBLEY EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.—PARLIAMENTARY PASS BETWEEN MR. SIBLEY AND THADDEUS STEVENS OF

PENNSYLVANIA.—THE "HIGHER LAW."—PASS BETWEEN MR. WENTWORTH AND MR. SIBLEY.—SQUATTERS.—PRE-EMPTION OF UNSURVEYED LANDS.—MR. SIBLEY'S "HIGHER LAW."—CONGRESS DENIES PRE-EMPTION OF UNSURVEYED LANDS.—BILL MODIFIED AND PASSED.—THE LAW OF NECESSITY AND NATURE SUPERIOR TO POSITIVE STATUTE.—RIGHTS OF THE PIONEERS VINDICATED.—JOSHUA B. GIDDINGS.—COMMON SENSE OF MANKIND AN IMPERIAL LAW.—SQUATTER SOVEREIGNTY, FREE SOILERS, AND SECESSIONISTS.—PARTY PREJUDICE.—RESULT OF THE DEBATE.—MR. SIBLEY ON THE INDIAN APPROPRIATION BILL.—INSISTS ON REORGANIZING THE INDIAN DEPARTMENT.—ANOTHER SPEECH PROMISED ON THE INDIAN BILL.

THE territorial government of Minnesota went into operation, as we have seen, pursuant to two successive proclamations by Governor Ramsey, dated June 1, and June 11, 1849, the first proclaiming the government and requiring obedience to its laws, the second dividing the territory into three judicial districts. In accordance with a requirement of the organic act, a census of the population was taken, showing, as the result, a total of about five thousand inhabitants. Agreeably to previous determinations, the first day of August was chosen as the time for the election of a *delegate from the Territory of Minnesota to Congress*. Upon his return from the Congress of 1848-1849, the Hon. Mr. Sibley had freely expressed his mind, in an address to his constituents, in reference to their future action, and his own, concerning this important matter:

"I do not," said he, "assume to direct your views on this subject, nor dictate what course you should pursue. I only state my own opinions, based upon my observation and experience. You will soon be called upon to choose a delegate to represent the interests of Minnesota Territory in the Congress of the United States. Whether or not I shall be a candidate depends upon the value that will be attached to my labors hitherto, and on certain other contingencies. It is for the people to decide, in their primary assemblies, whether they will maintain the position they have hitherto assumed, or whether they will divide on the point of national politics. In either case, it will be for me to acquiesce in the determination. But, until party lines are drawn, I shall continue to occupy the same neutral ground I have heretofore contended for, until your fiat has gone forth that it must be abandoned, and that your public men must be tried by a party test; when, should I conclude to allow my name to appear before you in connection with the high station of delegate, I shall make a declaration of my political sentiments. Whoever may be selected to fill that office will find himself very differently situated from the delegate who represented the then unrecognized Territory of Wisconsin. He will have no struggle for admission to the house of representatives, nor be told that he owes his seat only to the courtesy of that body."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Address to the People of Minnesota, p. 5.

These wise, frank, and noble words, from one whose opinions on all points of national policy were distinctly defined and well understood, were received with the consideration to which they were entitled. Unconcealed and honest expression of opinion always begets confidence even where the judgment of the hearer stands adverse to that of the speaker, while successful and eminent service, in face of difficulties almost insuperable, always inspires gratitude and commands reward. In the nature of the case and the fitness of things, who else should be the first delegate from the new Territory of Minnesota than Henry Hastings Sibley, the "delegate from Wisconsin?" It is not surprising, therefore, to find that, in deference to the wisdom of Mr. Sibley, no political party was formed in the territory prior to his second election to Congress, and no partisan distractions marred the peace or broke the harmony of a loyal and grateful constituency. Nor is it surprising that — no other candidate being allowed to enter the field and compete for honors due only to himself — he should be chosen, as if by acclamation, *receiving, without opposition, the votes of all the electors in the territory.* On the first day of August, 1849, Mr. Sibley was thus sent, a second time, to the national legislature; a second time intrusted with the great interests of Minnesota. Nor till after the first session of the first legislature of the territory had been convened, November 1, 1849, and nearly three months subsequent to Mr. Sibley's re-election, did any organized political party exist in Minnesota, nor among the names of those who participated in the organization does the name of Mr. Sibley appear.<sup>1</sup> Between August 1, 1849, and December 4, 1849, the day of the meeting of Congress, were four months, three of which were employed by the delegate in matters of public interest to the territory. Chief among these were (1) Mr. Sibley's personal influence and efforts to suppress, in connection with the United States Indian Agent, R. G. Murphy, the infamous traffic in "*Minnewakan*," or "fire-water," to the use of which already many of the Dakotas had become addicted; (2) the propagation of a proper sentiment in reference to the public expenditure of the money voted by Congress for the territory; (3) the formation and incorporation of the Historical Society of Minnesota; and (4) personal service in assisting the administration of justice in the territory. It is among the many "*first things*" that cluster about Mr. Sibley's pioneer

<sup>1</sup> Neill's History of Minnesota, p. 518.

history, that he was the *first* foreman of the *first* grand jury ever impaneled in Minnesota; Judge Cooper presiding over the first territorial court held at Mendota, Governor Ramsey seated on the right, Chief Justice Goodrich on the left, but three of the jury understanding the English tongue, the rest French, and requiring the interpretation of the judge's charge.

Time's rapid wheel soon brought the fourth of December, 1849, and the necessity of Mr. Sibley's appearance in Washington. If wisdom had been required on the part of the "delegate from *Wisconsin Territory*," in order to a successful struggle for his seat, and triumph of the rights of his constituents, in the previous Congress, much more was it now required for the "delegate from *Minnesota Territory*." The whole country was convulsed, as never before, by the agitation of the great domestic question, the question of slavery. Discussion, crimination and recrimination, personal acerbity, threats of secession and dissolution of the Union, and counter threats of retaliation, abounded everywhere. Great men were in the senate; a Webster, Dickinson, and Chase; a Seward, Mason, and Calhoun; a Corwin, Clay, and Cass; a Jefferson Davis, Stephen A. Douglas, and Thomas Benton; and, in the house, a Winthrop, Hale, and Mann; a Wilson, Wilmot, and Wentworth; a Stephens, Cobb, and Toombs; a Giddings, Kaufmann, and Thompson; all surcharged with the electricity due to the friction of the hour. The great conflict, whose solution could only be by blood, twelve to sixteen years later, developed itself in the contest for the speaker of the house. Three political parties appeared in Congress. Respectively, their strength stood, in the senate, Democrats 34, Whigs 24, Free Soil 2, viz., Hale and Chase; and, in the house, Democrats 113, Whigs 105, Free Soil 13, among whom were Giddings and Wilmot, Julian and Preston King, Thaddeus Stevens, and Sprague. In the senate, the Democratic majority was eight over the other two combined; in the house, the other two combined stood five majority over the Democrats. On joint ballot, the Democratic majority was three, with a threatened decrease from the Northern ranks. Such the situation, at the opening of the Thirty-first Congress, General Zachary Taylor being president of the United States, the Hon. Millard Fillmore vice president and president of the senate. On the first day of its session, December 4, 1849, the senate chamber saw forty-one senators in their seats, at twelve o'clock, meridian,

while in the house two hundred and twenty-three members answered to their names. At once it was moved to proceed to the election of a speaker, the Hon. Howell Cobb of Georgia, Hon. Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts, and Hon. David Wilmot of Pennsylvania, being the three prominent candidates. For *nineteen* days, viz., from December 4th to December 23d, at an expense of \$57,000 to the nation, and under a parliamentary strain unexampled in the annals of the world, the house of representatives struggled, in vain, to choose its chief officer. *Sixty-two* times the long and weary, yet exciting, roll call of two hundred and twenty-three members was enacted, amid scenes of acrimonious debate, accusations of bargain and sale, secret correspondence, exposed manipulations, tumult, cheers, and chaos. All the chief candidates withdrew, only to be voted for again. After the thirty-ninth roll call, Winthrop withdrew, followed, next day, by Cobb and Wilmot. Letters poured in from all parts of the country and every newspaper reported the proceedings. After the fifty-fifth roll call, a resolution was offered that "the clergymen of the different denominations, in the city of Washington, be invited to conduct the devotions of the house, with *sincere* prayer to the Giver of all good for a speedy and satisfactory organization and a dispatch of the public business."<sup>1</sup> After the fifty-ninth roll call it was moved that the clergy *continue* their services "*until* a regular speaker is elected," whereupon the amendment was offered "and that the house *do fast during the same period!*" an amendment greeted with "roars of laughter." At last, on the sixty-third roll call, the Hon. Howell Cobb was elected speaker by a *plurality* vote of 101 out of 221, declared *duly* elected, and conducted to the chair by his chief rival, the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, amid exultations of the house on the one side, and ominous expressions on the other.

To such a Congress, especially to such a house, arrayed for war, was the Hon. Mr. Sibley accredited, charged with the care of all the interests of the "Territory of Minnesota," and expected by his accomplishments, ability, influence, and personal manner, to carry through those measures on which its welfare and prosperity depended;—a result that could only be achieved by conciliating the co-operation of men the most diverse in politics and temperament. To what extent, and how success-

<sup>1</sup> Congressional Globe, Vol. 21, Part 1, p. 48.

fully, this trust was discharged, subsidizing help from all parties, posterity has already judged. No work more difficult, if we regard the temper of the times and the various speculations as to what the future of Minnesota might be, in its political aspect, was ever committed to the hands of anyone, and no praise more merited, for its achievement, was ever accorded to the representative of any state or territory.

He who thinks that the organization of a territorial government is the end of its cares, or that the representative of a new-born territory enjoys the office of a sinecure, has yet to learn that birth is only the beginning of life, and election to office only the fastening of a yoke on the neck, that binds to a servitude severe enough to exhaust the amplest and the strongest powers of men. As all children enter the world, crying, the like music attended the arrival of the "Territory of Minnesota." Perhaps in all its subsequent annals there never was known so great an amount of "*praying*," by all classes and conditions of men, white, Indian, and half-breed, as occurred in the years next following the first breath of its infancy. Memorial on memorial, petition on petition, increasing and unintermitted; \$10,000 sought for this object, \$20,000 for that, and \$40,000 for still something else; a township of land here, 100,000 acres there; rights of way for this, and donations for that, was the order of the day. The governor prays, the legislature prays, the individual prays, sixty-three citizens pray here, and one hundred and eighty-six citizens pray there; all pray in concert, united, fervent, importunate, for the relief of their wants. The whole combined stream of territorial supplication is poured into the ears of Congress, through the mediatorship of the territorial delegate, who, faithful to his trust, adds to their cry the merit of his own intercession. The people want post roads, military roads, railroads, and roads of every kind. Obstructions need to be removed from the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. A bridge must crown the head of the great "Father of Waters." The frontier must be protected by military force, and a new military post established. The laws of the United States must be extended over the Indian tribes for the punishment of crime and security of the people. These are felt to be necessities, and justly so. Treaties with the Indians must be negotiated and Indian titles extinguished. Buildings for the capital, a territorial prison, an insane asylum, school, academy, uni-



versity, libraries, and the reduction of postage on papers and periodicals for the formation of education and knowledge, must be had. The rights of the old pioneers must be protected, and pre-emption rights, if possible, extended to settlers on lands still unsurveyed. The land office must be duplicated. Means must be had for the adequate salaries of territorial officers, and the support of the territorial legislature. Public and private claims must be adjusted. The school lands must be made productive of revenue. Compensation for injuries and losses incurred in years gone by and for services rendered to the territory by civil and military force, must be obtained, the homestead must be made sure, and appropriations from Congress secured for the accomplishment of nearly every one of these ends.

When it is remembered that all these objects can only come before Congress by petition, memorial, resolution, joint resolution, bill, amendment, and motion, to refer to various conflicting committees, then reported and discussed, and that the drafting of bills, resolutions, as also preparation for the advocacy and defense of these objects, fall on the head and heart of the delegate alone, and that he is expected, by every means in his power, now working through the house, and now through the senate, and, if baffled in one method, attempting another, to be ever ready and alert, watching the interests of his constituents, some feeble conception may be gained hereby of the burden of responsibility and care that weighed on the mind of the Hon. Mr. Sibley as the representative of a new territory whose wants were numerous almost as its population, and whose expectations were boundless as their confidence in the man to whom their interests had been intrusted. And something of the success that attended the labors of Mr. Sibley, and of his power to give an impetus to the development of the territory, may be judged from this, that Minnesota, organized with but 5,000 inhabitants, was able, within nine years, to knock at the door of Congress with nearly 140,000 inhabitants, and a progress in territorial improvement rarely surpassed, and demand admission, and be admitted, May 11, 1858, as one of the confederated states of the Union.

As among the first and most pressing needs of a new territory, open to every kind of population, competition, and enterprise, are facilities of communication, preservation of



the rights of the old settlers, the education of the young, the punishment of crime, and defense against hostile attack, so the first act of Mr. Sibley, on his return to the Thirty first Congress, was, December 31, 1849, to present to the house the memorial of the legislative assembly of the territory praying for (1) the improvement of the Mississippi river above the Falls of St. Anthony, (2) the establishment of certain mail routes and additional mail facilities, (3) the construction of certain roads in the territory, (4) an amendment to the law granting pre-emption rights, and relative to section 36 of the school lands, and (5) for means to erect a territorial prison. These several petitions were, in the order above named, referred, respectively, in the following order, to the Committees on Territories, Post Offices and Post Roads, Roads and Canals, Public Lands, and Territories. January 3, 1850, swiftly at work, he gave notice of his intention to introduce three bills, (1) a bill for the benefit of Minnesota Territory, (2) a bill for extending the laws of the United States over the Indian tribes in the territory, and (3) a bill for the establishment of certain post roads in the territory. Objection being made to his request for unanimous consent of the house to allow him to *introduce* the bills of which notice had been given, he improved the time immediately following by presenting the petitions of Elizabeth Odell and Mary Woodbury of the Sioux Nation, praying for the payment of certain money due under the Indian treaty of 1837, claims he regarded as only just, and the payment of which he successfully pressed as only right.

January 18, 1850, he presented to the house a bill "for extending the right of pre-emption to settlers on unsurveyed lands," and on the twenty-eighth instant, gave notice of a bill "to provide for the construction of certain roads in Minnesota Territory." January 28, 1850, again asking unanimous consent of the house to introduce a bill "for the construction of certain roads in Minnesota Territory, and objection again being made from the same quarter as before, Mr. Sibley, acting on the Baconian aphorism that, what cannot be accomplished in one way may be achieved in another, moved the house, by a resolution, February 6, 1850, "That the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads be instructed to inquire into the expediency of establishing a post road from Point Douglas, via Cottage Grove, Red Rock, St. Paul, and the Falls of St. Anthony, to Fort Gaines and to Long Prairie and Pem-

bina; and from Point Douglas via Stillwater, Marine Mills, Falls of St. Croix, and Pokegama to Fond du Lac, all in the Territory of Minnesota; and to report thereon by bill or otherwise." Also, "That the Committee on Territories be instructed to inquire into the expediency of amending the acts for the organization of Minnesota and Oregon territories, so as to make the office of judges therein created elective by the people of said territories; and to report thereon by bill or otherwise." At the same time, he introduced into the house, (1) a bill "for the punishment of crimes and offenses committed by the Indians within the limits of Minnesota and Oregon territories," and (2) a bill "for the benefit of Minnesota Territory," the first of these being referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, the second to the Committee on Public Lands, February 22, 1850. He further moved the house, by resolution, "That the Committee on Military Affairs be instructed (1) to inquire into the sufficiency of the military force now stationed on the frontiers of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota Territory, for the defense thereof, and (2) in case said force is not sufficient, and there are no means at the disposal of the department of war, to instruct said committee to report a bill authorizing the president of the United States to call into the service of the United States such volunteers as may by him be deemed necessary to preserve the peace of the country." Opposition was again encountered from the Hon. Mr. Root of Ohio, who seemed to take pleasure in objecting to everything offered by the delegate from Minnesota, whereupon Mr. Sibley moved a suspension of the rules of the house, in order to secure, by vote of the house, the acceptance of his resolution. The rules were suspended, by a handsome majority, and the resolution for the protection of the frontier was then received by the house and adopted.

A faithful friend to the Indian in every distress, and yet against whom, in later years, he was compelled to draw the sword, he obtained leave of the house, March 11, 1850, to introduce a "joint resolution for the relief of certain bands of the Sioux Nation," which was received, read twice by its title, and by the rules of the house, involving as it did an appropriation of money, was referred to the committee of the whole on the state of the Union, resulting in the relief desired. April 24, 1850, he presented the "memorial of the people of Minnesota for an appropriation for the survey of

the Mississippi river above the Falls of St. Anthony, preparatory to its improvement," and secured its reference to the proper committee. May 13, 1850, he introduced a resolution "that the Committee on Territories be instructed to inquire into the expediency of making provision, by law, for granting the legislative assembly of Minnesota Territory the right to prolong its next annual session to a period of ninety days, for the purpose of enabling it to perfect a code of laws for said territory." Again objection was made by the honorable member for Ohio, Mr. Root, and others, and the house refusing to suspend the rules in order to receive the resolution, Mr. Sibley renewed the resolution in the form of a petition, May 16, 1850, which was received and referred to the Committee on Territories. On the same day, Mr. Sibley presented a "memorial of the people of Minnesota, praying Congress to place the school lands at the disposal of the legislature, so far as to allow said body to rent them."

Ever watchful of the interests of his constituents, and of the time when the various house committees, to whom the memorials, petitions, and resolutions he had offered were referred, should report, Mr. Sibley, May 28 and 29, 1850, was in his seat when the Hon. Mr. Thompson, chairman of the Committee on Territories, called for the order of the day, viz., the bill making further appropriations for public buildings in Minnesota and Oregon territories, \$20,000 being assigned to each of these territories for the erection of penitentiaries, and the expenditure of \$20,000 more for the erection of temporary buildings at the permanent seat of government. Through Mr. Sibley's influence, the bill was temporarily laid aside and the motion carried that, when reported again, it should be with the recommendation that it pass. What work had been done with the committee may be learned from the fact that when the bill to provide for the construction of certain roads in Minnesota Territory was reported to the house, the several sums it appropriated were \$15,000 for the construction of a road from Point Douglas to the rapids of the St. Louis river of Lake Superior; \$10,000 from the same point to Fort Gaines; \$5,000 from the mouth of Swan river to the Winnebago Agency at Long Prairie; \$5,000 for a road from Wabasha to Mendota; \$5,000 for the survey and laying out of a military road from Mendota to the mouth of the Big Sioux river; these roads to be made under the direction of the secretary of war,

and their contracts determined by him. With an amendment to the bill, that the governors of Minnesota and Oregon territories shall annually report to Congress an itemized statement of the expenditure of all moneys appropriated for the benefit of said territories, applied under the order of the governor and legislative assembly, and the addition of the words, "and for other purposes," to the title of the bill, the bill was passed by the house. Thus, in connection with the bill preceding this, the sum of \$80,000, in addition to the amounts appropriated in the bill of the previous session of Congress organizing the Territory of Minnesota, had been secured to the people of Minnesota from the national treasury for the purposes above stated. Among the many petitions and memorials presented to the house by Mr. Sibley during this first session of the Thirty-first Congress, 1849-1850, was that of Charles Carreno, praying for the passage of an act by Congress, instructing the Indian department to pay, from the annuities due to the Chippewa Indians, a reasonable sum of money for personal injuries sustained by him at the hands of an individual of that tribe.

Among the deeply interesting questions which, during the first session of the Thirty-first Congress, agitated not only the house, but the senate and the whole country, were *two*, in the public discussion of which Mr. Sibley took part, the one relating to the admission of delegates from Utah and New Mexico, and also relating to the rights and privileges of delegates in general on the floor of the house, the popular branch of Congress, the other in relation to the policy of the federal government toward the Indians. It is well known, as a matter of history, that, for the purpose of acquiring the vast region of Texas, the United States, taking the initiative, first of all made offer to Mexico to buy Texas, which offer Mexico declined. The next step toward the attainment of the object thus sought, but so far defeated, was the declaration of Texan independence. The third step was the admission of Texas into the Union, her western boundary being the river Nueces. In 1836, however, Texas claimed jurisdiction to the Rio Grande, covering by this claim the entire province of New Mexico which had been conquered by the federal arms, the people of New Mexico, hostile to the Texans, disputing the claim. As Texas had been secured in the interest of slavery, and New Mexico had declared herself in favor of freedom, the antagon-

ism of interest and policy was sharp and intense as possible. The delegate from New Mexico — her boundary line in dispute, her competence to declare for freedom denied, jurisdiction over her claimed by another state, unorganized still as a territory, her relation to Texas on the one hand and to the United States on the other, a matter of contention — had come to Washington. Having appeared in the house of representatives, his credentials were referred to the Committee on Elections, the committee reporting in favor of his admission to a seat on the floor of the house as "the delegate from New Mexico." Party lines were drawn at once. At the same time, Utah, in an abnormal manner, had also sent a delegate to Congress, and the Committee on Elections had similarly reported in favor of his admission to a seat in the house, as the "delegate from Utah."

What involved Mr. Sibley in the discussion that arose was the singular fact that his own admission to a seat in the house as the "delegate from Wisconsin Territory," at the opening of the second session of the previous Congress, was pleaded by the friends of the delegates of Utah and New Mexico, as a *precedent applicable to both these cases*. The discussion brought out fully the merits of the whole controversy, while the temper of the times revealed a spectacle of political morality humiliating to the nation, evincing how the one great question that divided North and South was the sole question by which, in a party interest, every other question was to be determined. It was in the midst of the discussion, July 16, 1850, the Hon. Mr. Ashe of North Carolina yielding the floor, that Mr. Sibley rose to "disentangle" his own case, and that of the Territory of Wisconsin he had represented, in the previous session, from the cases of the delegates of Utah and New Mexico. Substantially the points of his argument were these, viz.: (1) That no parallel existed between the territories of New Mexico and Utah on the one side and the *residuum* of Wisconsin Territory on the other, the latter being under a legally organized government, recognized by Congress, and unrepealed, in terms, when Wisconsin was admitted as a state. (2) That he had been duly elected by the people, his credentials bearing the attestation of the governor and the broad seal of the territory. (3) That the Committee on Elections, and the house, by a vote of 124 to 63, had decided that the Territory of Wisconsin had a

legal existence and was entitled to representation. (4) That, although some members of the house repudiated the doctrine of the committee, and claimed to have given their votes on the score of courtesy alone, yet, where a large number of United States citizens existed, as *bona fide* settlers, outside the limits of a state, but inside the territorial limits out of which the state was carved, it was always in the discretion of the house, and in accord with the spirit of our institutions, to admit a regularly elected delegate, representing them, to a seat on the floor of the house. (5) That, could the parallel be drawn between the cases of the delegates from Utah and New Mexico, *so far* the action of the house would be a precedent for the cases then pending, but no further. But (6) beyond all these considerations just named, Mr. Sibley contended that his claim, last session, to a seat in the house was based on a deeper and more enduring ground. To use his own concluding language: "I must frankly say that my claim for admission here, at the last session, was based upon what I regarded then, and regard now, as a far more tenable position. I contended then, and contend now, that there was no moral or legal right, on the part of the government, to disfranchise and virtually outlaw a portion of its own citizens, *after it had encouraged them to become settlers, and sold them lands whereon to establish themselves.* \* \* \* It was a *vital* principle that was involved, and I regret that it was not positively affirmed in the decision of the house."<sup>1</sup> It was clear from this lucid exposition of the facts in the case that to admit the delegates from Utah and New Mexico, by virtue of the application of the action of the house in Mr. Sibley's case, would have been a willful perversion of his case, and a wrong to the Territory of Wisconsin, by equating it with Utah and New Mexico. Chiefly, as to New Mexico, it never was an organized territory, nor never had a civil government, nor was the election of its delegate by the people, but solely by a *quasi* military government, self-constituted but afterward repudiated by the people. After a long and severe discussion, the whole matter was, by a decisive vote, "laid upon the table."

As to the rights of delegates admitted to their seats in the house, the Hon. Mr. Boyden of North Carolina and the Hon. Mr. Stephens of Georgia had taken the ground that delegates from territories organized and recognized by the Congress of

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<sup>1</sup> Congressional Globe, Vol. 21, Part 2, p. 1339.



the United States had but one sole right and privilege in the house, viz., that of addressing the speaker strictly in reference to matters appertaining to the interests of the territory he represented. The right to make a motion, frame a bill, introduce a resolution, or discuss any subject outside the special territorial interest, was denied. In reply to both these gentlemen, Mr. Sibley took the opportunity, August 2, 1850, to assert and defend the position that, to every duly elected delegate, from any territory recognized by the government, belongs every right that pertains to any representative of a state, save that of voting. The *vote* alone is the *legislative act* peculiar to state representatives. All else is common to representatives and delegates alike. And this he demonstrated was "the doctrine of the country" and of the ablest statesmen in it. It was the doctrine of the act of 1817 which defines the duties of delegates, and extends to them the full right of deliberation and debate, but not of voting. And it is grounded in the nature of the case. For (1) there is no measure discussed in Congress, and no legislation taken, which does not affect, directly or remotely, the people of the territories, as truly as it does those of the states; and (2) a territory is not a mere colony, but an integral member, and essential part, of the great republic itself, a recognized portion of the citizens of the United States, equally interested with all the rest, in all that is transacted in the popular branch of the common government, and in the senate as well; while (3) its people have all the specific and constitutional rights of all other citizens resident in the states, and are taxed for the support of the government. Such, in brief, is the substance of the reply of Mr. Sibley, made, and made conclusively, to the argument that assailed his right to discuss questions outside the strict matter appertaining to his own constituency. And in this position he was sustained by the house with overwhelming vote, when, during the previous session, his "right to move the previous question" was challenged on the sole ground that he was "a delegate from a territory not yet admitted as a state." Had Mr. Sibley been a less important personage, or a delegate of only mean or ordinary influence, or had his adversaries not been men of the extremest sort of strict construction, the challenge and reply had not occurred. As it was, it provided him an opportunity to show what, everywhere, he showed, that though latest born among the mem-



bers of the house, he stood second to none in his knowledge of the Constitution and the history of the country, the precedents of Congress, or as a debater on its floor.

Next in importance to the right to be heard, stands the *right use* of that right, and nowhere did the delegate from Minnesota exercise it with more eloquence or charm than when pleading the cause of the red man, a theme that ever evoked the utterance of his deepest convictions, and breath of his warmest sympathies. He regarded the Indian as wronged, oppressed, betrayed, and driven to desperation, and even to massacre, by the inhuman conduct of the federal government and its agents. With unsparing severity he assailed its policy. Perfectly acquainted with it, personally observant of its operation and effect, familiar, as a pioneer, and Western head of the great Astor Fur Company, with the Indian tribes that roamed the Western lands, and among whom he lived, whose costume he had worn, whose language he spoke, whose natural virtues, modes of life, their character and needs and wrongs, he knew, and degradation too; for fifteen years their friend and their companion; of all men in either hall of Congress, none were more able, and none more entitled to speak on this subject than was he. By a divine dispensation, as it were, the mission seems to have been intrusted to him to speak for the Indian. What Sumner was to the *black man*, Sibley was to the *red man*, in every emergency. Nor did he omit any favorable opportunity. Already the bill he had introduced in reference to the extension of the laws of the United States over the aboriginal tribes of the country, especially of Oregon and Minnesota, had gone to the Committee on Indian Affairs. It was, April 30, 1850, when the general discussion upon the bill for taking the seventh census of the United States had reached its height, that Mr. Sibley rose from his seat, and, entitled to the floor, gave notice of an amendment to the effect "that the secretary of the interior cause an *enumeration* to be made of all the Indian tribes within the limits of the states and organized territories of the Union, so far as practicable." The appalling fact existed that the Indians were diminishing at the rate of from 2,000 to 4,000 a year, or from 20,000 to 40,000 during the intervals between the taking of the census, and it was but right and humane that the government should inquire into the real cause of this distressing fatality, and seek, if possible, a remedy for the same. How thoroughly in earnest

was the eloquent champion of the red man's rights, may be learned from but a single passage of his speech on that occasion. "Sir," said he, "during this session we have heard these halls ring with eloquent denunciations of the oppressor, — with expressions of sympathy for the downtrodden millions of other lands, — while gentlemen seem not to be aware that there exists, under the government of this republic, a species of grinding and intolerable oppression of which the Indian tribes are the victims, and, compared with which, the worst forms of human bondage, now existing in any Christian state, may be regarded as a comfort and a blessing."<sup>1</sup>

These words, however, were but a preparatory note to Mr. Sibley's formal arraignment of the policy of the government, three months later. August 2, 1850, the Indian appropriation bill being under discussion before the house, Mr. Sibley obtained the floor, and, moving to strike out the first section of the bill, proceeded to address the house upon the relation of the government to the Indian tribes, especially of the Northwest. He who reads, carefully, the debates and speeches in the National Congress, will find other parliamentary efforts more protracted than this one, and some which have acquired a national and world-wide fame, — not, however, from their intrinsic merit but from the intense interest of the nation and the world, at the time of their delivery, in the questions with which they were connected, — the speeches of a Webster, a Seward, a Sumner, a Calhoun, a Clay, in reference to "Compromise," "Secession," and "Dissolution of the Union," — but, from first to last, even with the oppression of the negro for a theme, will he find no speech by any senator or representative, of merit superior to that delivered by the delegate from Minnesota on the occasion above mentioned. For chasteness and perfection of expression, logical order, wealth of historic knowledge, deep moral earnestness of sentiment, unsparing arraignment of the government, portrayal of the wrongs inflicted on the red man, recognition of a righteous Providence which metes to nations as to men the reward due to their offenses, pathetic pleadings in behalf of the Indian whose home and soil and graves of his fathers the government had wrested from him by violence and fraud, and for thrilling appeal to the intellect, heart, and conscience of the country, it stands, in its eight solid columns of the *Congres-*

<sup>1</sup> *Globe*, Vol. 21, Part 1, p. 855.

*sional Globe*, unsurpassed by any ever heard by congressional ears. To attempt to analyze it is to destroy it, it is so agglutinated in the progress and the process of its thought. The problem before the government, with respect to the Indian, Mr. Sibley declared to involve but two alternatives in its solution, either (1) the entire civilization of the Indian tribes, or (2) their entire extermination, a solution intimately connected with the peace, safety, and prosperity, or oncoming unparalleled disaster of the territories in whose midst, or on whose frontiers, the Indian tribes are found. He reviews the *policy* of the government, reminding the nation that it is not now what it was in earlier times. He suggests the *remedy* for existing evils. As to the policy of the government, it is one of injustice, cruelty, treachery, violation of treaties the most sacred, stipulations and promises being regarded as convenient means of public robbery and private fraud, the will of the stronger ever the rule of action, the dictation of the purchaser ever the price of the soil, the red man forced to surrender his possessory rights in immemorial tenures of country endeared by the traditions and graves of his tribe, or bayoneted, rifled, shot, or driven from one so-called "reservation" to another, until, at last, turning enraged on his foe, he sought vengeance in massacre, crime, and deeds of brutality, for which the government itself, and its horde of vagabond "Indian agents," worse than the Indians themselves, were alone responsible. With great power, he pointed the house to the fact that, unlike the ancient Greeks and Romans, and later Franks, or the British Empire, who never withheld from their conquered captives the means to endow them with privileges indispensable to their existence and civilization, it remained for the Anglo-Saxons, and even the sons of the Pilgrim Fathers, escaped from persecution, to wrest by cruelty and crime the *soil* itself that gave to the red man birth, nurtured his youth, and cheered his manhood, and contained in its breast the ashes of his sires, without even once seeking to lift him to a level high as their own, or laboring to incorporate him into their own community. Still more, under no other nation of conquerors were the conquered ever known to become extinct, while under the policy of the American Government, a race of men of noble natural virtues, with whose heroic efforts in defense of their wives and children, their homes and rights, history had dealt falsely, were fast becom-

ing exterminated. What wonder that the so-called "Indian atrocities" should be enacted? For every Indian war, since the country had an existence, the government alone was responsible. "Sir," said he, in the fidelity of a fearless utterance, "*all* the Indian wars you have had on your hands, and what are likely to occur hereafter, have been and will be occasioned by proceedings such as I have but faintly described, on the part of your agents. The Black Hawk difficulty, so called, which cost you millions of dollars, was so brought about. The Florida war took its origin in the treaty of Payne's Landing, by which the Seminoles conceived themselves deeply defrauded and wronged. This war has already cost you some thirty or forty millions, and from present indications is likely to be renewed at another heavy expenditure on your part. And, sir, this government will continue to be involved in troubles with the Indian tribes until it ceases to pursue its present course, and adopts a policy more in accordance with the principles of justice and humanity."<sup>1</sup>

Not less, at times, did Mr. Sibley draw attention to the glaring inconsistency and self-contradiction of a government boasting of freedom yet surpassing all others in acts of despotic power; nay, more, of that very section of the country loudest in rebuke of African slavery, yet slowest in rebuke of Indian wrongs. What a spectacle for the world's public mockery and derision of American institutions! Blessing a Kossuth yet cursing an Osceola! Applauding the European struggle of 1848 in behalf of popular liberty, yet crushing two races of men, the one the natural owners of the American soil, the other imported to work it, in sweat of their face, and in bonds! and even the Indians' ill treatment worse than the African's condition! A territorial development crowned with such guilt and age-long infliction of wrong, for the sake of greatness and gain, could only invite the punishment such transgression provoked. Already, in the waxing discord of the nation, the menace of civil strife, the threat of disunion, and the ravage of pestilence slaying its scores of thousands, Mr. Sibley saw the portent of judgment that one day must break on the land, unless the nation forsook its ways and turned to a better mind. He stood in the halls of Congress as the interpreter of moral righteousness and the vindicator of the moral government of him who appoints to nations the due

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 21, Part 2, p. 1506.

reward of their sins, and inflicts, by their own hands, the chastisement their crimes have deserved. What Sumner was to the black man, Sibley was to the red man.

As to the *remedy*, Mr. Sibley suggested to Congress, in substance, as follows: (1) The total and instant abandonment of the present system of reservations. (2) The extension of the laws of the United States over the aboriginal tribes of the country. This he regarded as the *fundamental* measure, the *sine qua non*, in any possible solution of the problem of Indian civilization. (3) The gift of *separate property*, or personal possession of land, put beyond the power of alienation, so tending to break up the tribal relations, and need of reservations. (4) The endowment of the Indian with civil rights, all political rights held in abeyance until the proper future time to bestow them. (5) The establishment of manual labor schools for the education of Indian children, this education being made compulsory until such time as the same should no longer be needed. (6) The protection of the Indian from the demoralizing influences of the white man, to which already much of his degradation was due. (7) The continuation of annuities, until the Indians' condition rendered them no longer necessary. (8) And, by all these means, with the best religious restraints and examples thrown around him, to encourage, help, stimulate, uplift, and prepare him for reception, as an equal, in the American community. Such is a lame outline of the plan proposed as a remedy for the existing evils, and as a help to the solution, of the Indian problem. And with ardor worthy of a Wilberforce, a Howard, or a Clarkson, Mr. Sibley pressed it, in behalf of men whom, though savage, he described, from personal knowledge, as "*a noble race, gifted with a high order of intellect, and an aptitude for acquiring knowledge fully equal to that possessed by the whites.*" That it was no chimerical scheme he advocated, he proved by the weightiest testimonies from the ablest statesmen the United States had ever produced, from other writers, and from the heads of the Indian department of the government. There is something intensely stirring, in the early historic associations awakened by the thrilling question of the orator, "*Sir, who has a better claim upon the government of the United States, for civilization, than the Indian?*"

The peroration is *prophetic*. The inspired prophets of old, their eyes fixed on the future, their feet standing upon the

eternal law of righteousness, were wont to denounce the judgments of Heaven against the Hebrew commonwealth for its continued violation of truth, covenant, and right, and its continued oppression of the needy, the helpless, and the poor. Not less ominous of portending judgment to the American nation, and scarcely less impressive, are the closing words of the Hon. Mr. Sibley, when, forecasting the future, he warns the government of the calamity that one day must avenge the pursuit of its policy, so fraught with iniquity, and so fitted to provoke the vengeance of God.

"Mr. Chairman," said he, "I remark, in conclusion, that if anything is to be done it must be done *now*. The busy hum of civilized communities is already heard beyond the mighty Mississippi. You are about to remove the Oregon Indians to the *east* of the Cascade Mountains. The settlements in Utah and New Mexico are driving the tribes, that roam the prairies in that quarter, toward the east and the north. Your pioneers are encircling the *last home* of the red man, as with a wall of fire. Their encroachments are perceptible in the restlessness and belligerent demonstrations of the powerful bands who inhabit your remote Western plains. You must approach these with terms of conciliation and friendship, or you must soon suffer the consequences of a bloody and remorseless Indian war. Sir, what is to become of the fifty or sixty thousand savage warriors and their families, who line your frontier, when the buffalo and other game upon which they now depend for subsistence are exhausted? *Think you they will lie down and die without a struggle? No, sir; no!* The time is not far distant when, pent in on all sides, and suffering from want, a Philip, or a Tecumseh, will arise to band themselves together for a last and desperate onset upon their white foes. What then will avail the handful of soldiers stationed to guard the frontier? Sir, they, and your extreme Western settlements, will be swept away as with the besom of destruction. We know that the struggle, in such a case, would be unavailing on the part of the Indians, and must necessarily end in their extermination. *But this nation will subject itself to additional and awful retributions of that Providence without whose knowledge and permission not even a sparrow falls to the ground, if it fails to use every endeavor to avert so dire a catastrophe.* This republic is, even now, expiating its guilt in this respect, to some extent, by the visitations of pestilence, and the weakening of that bond of harmony among its members which was wont to exist. While manifesting an active sympathy for the nations of the Old World who are down-trodden by despotic power,—while, like the Pharisees of old, we ~~are~~ thanking God that we are not as other men are,—we seem to forget that we are still pursuing a line of policy toward the Indian race which has already destroyed countless thousands of them. Sir, this nation of more than twenty millions of people can well afford to reach forth its friendly hand to rescue the residue of this unhappy race from degradation and death. You are taking from them their lands, their homes, their all, and whatever return can be made them, in this hour of their greatest need, should be granted with an ungrudging and generous hand. Well might the eloquent Sevier, whose voice is



now silenced in death, thus appeal to the senate in behalf of the Indian tribes, in 1839. Said he, 'Let us remember the kind and hospitable reception of our ancestors by the natives of the country; a reception which has been perpetuated, in carved figures, in the walls of the rotunda of this capitol; and, in remembering these things, let us this day step forward and do something for our wretched dependents, worthy of a great, a merciful, and a generous Christian people.'"<sup>1</sup>

It is not an exaggeration to say that the halls of Congress never heard any appeal more simple, chaste, righteous, or powerful, or supported by higher sentiments of humanity, religion, and morality, or any cause vindicated by a higher sense of justice, gratitude, and duty. Read by itself, the extract quoted is indeed a specimen of the purest oratory, free from any taint of strained or spurious rhetoric, and productive of convictions deep and lasting. But, unwrenched from the whole preceding argument, so cogent and conclusive, and from the whole unsparing and intense impeachment of the government, its effect is magical, and forms a peroration of which, for dignity of tone, directness of address, and simple majesty, as well as tenderness and truth, the foremost orators of any age might well be proud. Had Congress but heeded the appeal, and laid to heart the prophecy its words contained, what agony, loss of treasure, and of blood, had it not averted! And how significant, not merely that the sad prediction was verified in history, but, far more, even that, when, in the hour of the nation's deepest woe, engaged in a civil war the greatest of the century, and of any nation, the mightiest, bloodiest, and widest, Indian massacre was added to her other miseries, it was to this eloquent orator the State of Minnesota and the nation looked, and at General Sibley's hands they found deliverance. Such conjunctures are not often chronicled in the annals of any people. With what satisfaction may the Minnesotians recall the fact that, fourteen years before the great Sioux outbreak, their delegate in Congress, the pioneer and prince of all their delegates, had protested to Congress, "*If, unfortunately, this government shall still persist in its present course, with a full knowledge of its unhappy tendency, Minnesota shall, at least, be free from all responsibility upon that score!*"<sup>2</sup>

Minds untainted by political prejudice, free from sectional asperity, and ennobled by the common instincts of

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 21, Part 2, pp. 1505-1508.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 1506.



humanity, would scarcely dream that an appeal so just, finding a response in every heart, and fraught with issues of such moment to the nation, could encounter opposition in the halls of Congress. It was reserved, however, for the Hon. Mr. Mason, as soon as Mr. Sibley had resumed his seat, to rise and, not alone resist, but ridicule, the effort of the delegate from Minnesota. Squarely, in the face of the whole argument of Mr. Sibley, his arraignment of the "*policy*" of the government, and his presentation of the "*remedy*" for existing evils, the honorable member asserted that "no plan had been proposed" to effect this object. Using the well-known sophism, built on the ambiguous word "equal," by the delegate from Minnesota, he further asserted that "history had proved it impossible to civilize the Indian, or make him equal to the white man;" that "Nature and Nature's God had made the white man, the red man, and the black man,"—"three races of animals, called men," to try and make whom equal is all the same as to try and "make every variety of *birds* equal,—those which have heavy bodies and small wings to fly and soar like eagles and other birds that have long wings and light bodies," with more of the same sort of zoological and ornithological argumentation. The scoff was aptly met by Mr. Sibley, interrupting, and inquiring sweetly, "if the gentleman did not regard the Hon. John Randolph and other Virginians, who boasted of their Indian blood, as men *furnished with long wings and light bodies*," Mr. Mason admitting the fact but pleading that this was only "*an exception*" to the general law. To this Mr. Sibley at once rejoined that, so far from being "*an exception*," it was but an "*illustration*" of the general law well known to everyone, and furthermore, "*that, wherever the Indian race are allowed the same advantages with the whites they are as capable of improvement, and are equal to them in every respect*," and that "*had the gentleman lived as long as he (Mr. Sibley) had, among the red men, he would be better versed in their history*." To other accusations of like nature Mr. Sibley applied the prompt and parliamentary castigation, and upon the principle of "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*," "Cobbler, stick to your last," allowed the honorable member to indulge his opposition without further interference, and veer off into a discussion of the policy the government ought to pursue with reference to the *blacks*. This episode is important, simply as showing the temper of the times and the difficulties Mr. Sibley was compelled to

meet at every step of his congressional career. Slavery for the black man, savagery for the red man, and freedom for the white man, seemed, to many, to be the sum of all political wisdom, and the essence of all genuine humanity.

With his defense of the claims of the Indian to civilization, Mr. Sibley closed his public utterances in the first session of the Thirty-first Congress. Of the bills, resolutions, and motions he had offered, some, as already seen, were acted upon with liberal favor, while others were either suppressed in the committees to whom they were referred, or not yet reported back, or still under discussion, or ordered on the files of the house as unfinished business reserved for future action at the next ensuing Congress. Faithful to his trust, instant in season and out of season, a shining credit to his constituents, having already won for himself the respect of the ablest men in both houses of Congress, he could now return to the bosom, and the greeting, of his friends at home, as once before, receive their cordial welcome, rehearse the labors of his servant-life in their behalf, and prepare himself for further duties that awaited him.

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THE second session of the Thirty-first Congress found the Hon. Mr. Sibley promptly at his post and early at his work. Already, by his personal accomplishments, he had won to himself the invaluable confidence and indispensable co-operation of senators of high renown, among them the Hon. Mr. Douglas, chairman of the senate's Committee on Territories, and the acknowledged champion of territorial rights and privileges. Allies so potent in the upper house, when the lower house showed disposition to embarrass or obstruct the wishes of Mr. Sibley in behalf of his constituents, could only prove a welcome stimulus, if such were needed, to the yet more vigorous prosecution of his task.

Pursuant to previous notice, first of all, in furtherance of the cause he loved so much, Mr. Sibley introduced a bill, December 10, 1851, "for the punishment of crimes and offenses committed in the Indian country within the limits of Minnesota Territory, and for promoting the civilization of the Indian race therein." The bill was twice read by its title and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs. December 13, 1850, he

gave notice of his purpose to introduce three other bills, viz., (1) a bill "to authorize the legislative assemblies of Minnesota and Oregon to lease the sixteenth and thirty-sixth sections of school lands, and for other purposes;" (2) a "bill to amend an act entitled 'An Act to establish the territorial government of Minnesota;'" (3) a "bill for the relief of certain settlers on the public lands, and for other purposes." The subject matter in the first of these was covered by a resolution, introduced by Mr. Sibley, December 18, 1850, instructing the Committee on Public Lands to inquire into the expediency of the same, and, again, January 4, 1851, was formulated into a special bill, introduced and twice read by its title, the former being referred to the Committee on Public Lands, the latter to the Committee on Territories, each to report by bill or otherwise. By unanimous consent, he also introduced, December 30, 1850, a bill covering the second of the three just named, viz., "to amend an act," as just quoted, which, in like manner, was read and referred to the Committee on Territories. The same day he presented the petition of Governor Ramsey, and others, of Minnesota, praying "for a grant of 100,000 acres of land, including the military reserve of Fort Snelling, to the Territory of Minnesota, for the endowment and support of a *university* therein," a prayer further strengthened by the petition of George C. Nichols, and others, invoking the same benefaction, and presented January 18, 1851. Attending the first of these, was also the petition of J. K. Humphrey, and others, praying "for a grant of one township of land to aid in the construction of a *magnetic telegraph* from Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, to St. Paul, Minnesota," and further enforced by the petition of Alexander Wilkin, and others, to the same effect. January 24, 1851, the house refusing to take from the speaker's table the senate bill "to reduce certain military reservations, and secure the rights of actual settlers on the same," Mr. Sibley then presented the petition of Samuel Thatcher, and others, praying that the military reservation, including Fort Snelling, "be sold at public sale, and the proceeds thereof expended in building a *bridge* across the Mississippi river, at the Falls of St. Anthony, and the remainder for the purpose of education." To this was added the petition of J. W. Simpson, and others, praying that W. Noots' improvements on school section 36 be secured to him, and other lands allowed to the Territory of Minnesota in lieu thereof."

By consent of the house, January 28, 1851, and on the urgency of Mr. Sibley, the senate bill "reducing the boundaries of the military reserve at the St. Peter's river" (the Minnesota river),<sup>1</sup> and "securing the rights of actual settlers," was taken up, twice read, and referred to the house's Committee on Public Lands. February 5, 1851, it was reported back to the house, without amendment, read, and sharply discussed. The following day, upon motion of Mr. Sibley again, the senate bill legislating "authority to the governors of Oregon and Minnesota, and the legislative assemblies of these territories, to provide, by law, for the lease of school lands, sections 16 and 36," was taken up, read, and also sharply discussed. February 19, 1851, Mr. Sibley presented the petition of J. P. Wilson, and others, praying "for an appropriation of \$10,000 to remove obstructions to the navigation of the Mississippi river, between Fort Snelling and St. Anthony Falls. Such is only a brief but important outline of the work undertaken and proposed by the delegate from Minnesota, for the short three-months' session of the Thirty-first Congress, so far as concerned the interests of Minnesota, viz., the introduction of four bills by himself, one resolution, the presentation of many petitions, and the reference of two senate bills, involving repeated, protracted, and, at times, incisive and animated discussions.

The bill proposing the reduction of the military reservation at the mouth of the St. Peter's river—now Minnesota river—evoked a debate in which a large number of the members of the house took part, Mr. Sibley, necessarily, among them. The facts were these. In 1805, a purchase was made from the Indians of nine square miles, or 50,000 acres, of the finest land at St. Peter's river, by Lieutenant Pike, in accordance with the orders of the president of the United States, for military purposes. Since then, as the Territory of Minnesota became settled, the military operations were removed into the interior, rendering the military post at Fort Snelling comparatively unnecessary, certain immigrants, by permission of the war department and encouragement of the officers of the fort, settling on the reservation lands then unsurveyed, and now claiming pre-emption rights, in view of the reduction of the reservation to whose improvement they had thus been virtually invited. After brief discussion, and

<sup>1</sup> Name changed, June 19, 1852.

some delay for the purpose of investigation, the senate had, without opposition, and with slight amendment, passed the bill now before the house, originally drafted for the senate by Mr. Sibley, and warmly advocated by Mr. Douglas. The occasion of the bill was the action of the territorial legislature of Minnesota memorializing Congress for a *reduction of the reservation to the dimensions of one mile square*, with legislation *securing the rights of actual settlers upon the residuum*, that is, the right to the value of their improvements, or purchase of the land at the government's minimum price. Pursuant to the memorial, the war department, agreeing with the territorial legislature as to the propriety of the proposed reduction, yet collided with it as to the claims of the actual settlers, and favored the sale of the reservation, at public auction, to the highest bidder. Hence the bill prepared by Mr. Sibley, offered in the senate by Mr. Douglas, and now, slightly modified, taken up, February 5, 1851, in the house. As a whole, it proposed the two things above memorialized, viz., (1) *the reduction of the reservation from nine square miles to one mile square*, and (2) *the security of the actual settlers thereon in their pre-emption rights*.

The resistance offered to the bill by many members of the house, and violently by some, was made on the following grounds, viz., (1) that the bill proposed to give a few settlers around Fort Snelling, to the exclusion of all others, pre-emption rights on unsurveyed lands; (2) that it prescribed a boundary line, prior to all survey of the land; (3) that the war department had not been consulted in reference to the measures of this line; (4) that strong objections were made by the department, and by some people in the territory, to the scheme proposed; (5) that it would be unfair should the government grant pre-emption to the favorites of the military officers of the fort, barring all others from the same; (6) that the sale of military reservations had always been conducted under the direction of the war department; (7) that hundreds of American citizens were ready to bid a high price for the lands when put upon the market; (8) that if any action was taken, it should be the total abolition of Fort Snelling; (9) that the bill ought to go to the Committee on Military Affairs; (10) that the reservation is more valuable than all other Minnesota lands, and should be sold, if at all, to the highest bidder; and (11) that the officers of the fort had no authority whatever, nor right, to grant advantages to some, on public

lands reserved for special use, while denying them to others equally deserving and desirous of obtaining them. These considerations were pressed with much vigor by the Hons. Messrs. Bowlin, chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, Vinton, Hall, Burt, Cobb, Wentworth, and others.

To one and all, the Hon. Mr. Sibley replied, single-handed, left, by the rest who sided with him, to bear the burden of the whole defense of the bill, confident of his ability to answer every objection. The substance of his reply, made amid successive interruptions, was as follows: (1) The territorial legislature of Minnesota, whom Congress must, in equity, regard as good judges in the case, and representing the will of the people of the territory, had memorialized Congress to grant what the bill provides; (2) through the ordeal of two most cautious, thorough, and competent committees of the senate, that on Public Lands, and that on Territories, the bill had already passed; (3) the senate itself, composed of the ablest men in the nation, had unanimously agreed to it, and after close consultation with the war department, and the general land office, exercising the utmost scrutiny and caution; (4) the house's Committee on Public Lands had recommended its passage; (5) the reservation in question is almost wholly unoccupied, only a few individuals, ten or twelve at most, near Fort Snelling residing thereon, invited and encouraged there by the military officers; (6) the reservation remains under military jurisdiction, an unfavorable circumstance in view of further expansion of its settlement; (7) the bill is of vital importance to the people of Minnesota, for it legislates for 50,000 acres to be redeemed to civil jurisdiction, and exposed to public sale, in the very heart of the choicest lands of Minnesota; (8) the people of the territory desire the passage of the bill; (9) the bill provides pre-emption only for a few actual settlers who have improved the reservation where their homestead is, and to deprive whom of the benefit of their own labors, taking from them land peculiarly their own and selling it to others for their higher price, would be eminently unjust; (10) all laws, indeed, at some point, operate unequally, and the bill may perhaps have some imperfections, and differ somewhat from the bill he originally drafted, but, in principle and essence, it is right and just; (11) the commissioner of the general land office had written to him (Mr. Sibley) affirming that the bill, as proposed, "carries out the principles and prac-



tices heretofore observed in analogous cases;" (12) not more than 1,200 out of 50,000 acres will be pre-empted, his own homestead included,—he frankly admitted,—yet he asked for himself no favor from the government, but earnestly desired that the principles of natural justice and of equity might prevail in reference to others whose pioneer hardships and toils entitled them to the fruits of their own exertion, and the protection of the government; (13) as to abolishing Fort Snelling, that was a question for the war department, not for him; (14) the territorial legislature asks that persons, who, under the encouragement of government officers, have located on the reservation, but are now driven from the same by the military authorities, may be protected in their rights, it being a sore grievance that they are not; and (15) desiring, as he did, only what is just and right, and the closest scrutiny and fullest light to all upon the subject, and anxious that the bill should be perfected, if any serious defect existed, he now moved the reference of the bill to the Committee on Military Affairs.

Comment upon the reply of Mr. Sibley to the adversaries of the bill is unnecessary. The reply is self-evidently grounded in the deepest sentiments of natural right, and breathes the loftiest spirit of a true humanity. Had the settlers, whose rights he sought to protect, been 10,000 instead of ten or twelve, the "*principle*" he advocated would not be one whit augmented in importance by their number. A pioneer himself, he knew the hardship of a pioneer life, and his sympathy with the pioneers of the West was only natural. The house unanimously acceded to his wish, and the bill was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, not reappearing until the following Congress, for want of time.

Warmer still, however, waxed the discussion the same day, when, again, upon motion of Mr. Sibley, the kindred senate bill was taken up, "authorizing the legislative assemblies of Oregon and Minnesota to take charge of the *school lands* in said territories, and for other purposes." The first section of the bill gave authority to the territorial governors and legislatures to *lease* school sections 16 and 36, as deemed best for the object for which these sections were set apart. The secured sections granted *pre-emption* rights to the actual settler on these sections, unsurveyed as they were. The third section granted a quantity of land, not exceeding two town-



ships, for the purposes of a *university*. The same principle, to a certain extent, involved in the terms and discussion of the preceding bill relative to the reduction of the military reserve, entered here also, and elicited the same, but intenser, opposition. The debate continued two successive days, Hon. Messrs. Vinton, Johnson, Bowlin, Sweetser, Wentworth, Burt, and others resisting, and Hon. Messrs. Sibley, Boyd, and Fitch defending, the provisions and principles of the bill.

The sum of objections, in substance, made to the bill was (1) that the granting of pre-emption rights to actual settlers on unsurveyed lands, and especially *school* lands, was an innovation contrary to the customary legislation, a privilege to "squatters" in violation of positive law, and ought not to be countenanced; (2) that there can be no such thing as a "*bona fide settler*" on school lands, no person having a right either to go or to be there, all persons, by law, being inhibited from occupation of the same; (3) that no sufficient reason existed why Congress should now depart from the law for the benefit of Oregon and Minnesota; (4) that the law forbade pre-emption in advance of survey, otherwise men might select for themselves the choicest portions of the territory, and deprive the school fund of its just revenue as well as of its land; (5) that pre-emption rights are confined exclusively to settlers on surveyed lands, whereas the bill is an infringement of this enactment and wholly at variance with the general principles and purposes of the land system; (6) that the subject matter of the bill had already been passed upon and condemned by the Committee on Public Lands; (7) that the leasing of the school sections, so magnificently timbered, would result in the removal of the timber in less than four years, and nothing of value be left for school purposes; (8) that no such legislation existed in reference to other territories, and the claimants of pre-emption rights, in regard to these lands, were but robbers of the fund and pirates of the land; (9) that Congress would be responsible for all damage done to the school interest, and within, or at the close of, four years, the term of the lease, would be called upon by the people of the territory to refund to the extent of the injury sustained; and (10) that, as to granting Minnesota *two* townships, now, as a territory, and then *two* more, when entering the Union as a state, ought to be resisted. Such the substance of objection.

The burden of the whole rejoinder fell again upon Mr. Sibley alone. He was equal to the task. He responded by showing (1) that every pre-emption law was for the benefit of the settlers on the public domain, and had in view its speedy occupation, so promoting the development of the country and contributing to its greatness and wealth. The bill before the house embodied no other principles than what had already been recognized as just. The actual settler was entitled, justly, to the improvements he had made and the enhanced value of the land where he had located, and which he had enriched by his self-denial and toil. The law was grounded in the principles of natural right and that immemorial equity which conceded to man a proprietary claim to the fruits of his own labor. It was, moreover, the one encouragement given to induce men to encounter the hardships of a pioneer life; (2) that "there is no reason why men who have, *accidentally*, become the occupants of what proves *subsequently* to be a *school section* should not be protected in the same manner. If they are not allowed the same rights as *other bona fide* settlers, a great wrong will be perpetrated upon them, and no man would feel safe in bestowing his labor on any unsurveyed land through fear of finding himself on a school section, and being deprived thereby of his improvements and his homestead,"<sup>1</sup> (3) that the whole matter in question "affects only the school funds, and that, if the people of the territory were willing to grant pre-emption rights to those who had unknowingly settled on school lands, it seemed to him that they were the proper judges in the case." Were the bill inherently wrong, or against the popular will, he would never be found its advocate here. But the legislative assembly of Minnesota had memorialized Congress to enact substantially the provisions it contained. Moreover, he argued, no injustice could be done; none to the territory; none to the school fund. By *common usage* of the country, and in an interest of immense value to the country, every man who settled upon and improved the unoccupied public domain, *even though unsurveyed*, was secured in his right to purchase the land at the minimum government price, when put on the market. And it was but right it should be so, unless all encouragement to the noble race of hardy pioneers should be forever withdrawn. Even conceding that "*no existing law*" expressly legislates pre-emption to

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 23, p. 435.

settlers on unsurveyed lands, yet it is well known that "every man who settled on the unsurveyed lands had *virtually* a pre-emption. *No man dare dispute his right;*" (4) that, yet further, so far from the bill being obnoxious to the charge of innovation, and unparalleled in the legislation for other territories, "the first and third sections of the bill were copied, nearly *verbatim*, from similar bills relating to the territories of Michigan and Wisconsin," and the second section of the bill was also nearly an exact copy of a law passed authorizing the settlement of certain school lands in Florida, Iowa, and Wisconsin." True, indeed, the legislation as to Florida, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan territories had reference to French and Spanish land grants, and none such existed in Minnesota. But the "*principle involved*" is precisely the same. *All the occupants were settlers on unsurveyed lands. And pre-emption was granted to all.* The principle was "exactly embodied in the act read by the clerk, in the law passed in 1844." He could not see why persons living on other sections of unsurveyed lands should be entitled any more than the man who had *happened* to be situated on the sixteenth and thirty-sixth sections; (5) that, as to the fear expressed by the gentleman (Bowlin) that the "*lease*" of the school sections would deprive the school fund of its just revenue, he thought that "the gentleman could have but little confidence in the legislative assembly of Minnesota, to suppose that the public school lands in that territory were not as safe under the care of the territorial authorities as in the keeping of the gentleman himself or of the general government." He could "tell the gentleman that there is not a man in Minnesota who is not most anxious, and who would not strain every nerve, to preserve the public lands set apart for school purposes from deterioration, and the people, he believed, were perfectly willing to confide this trust to the territorial legislature."<sup>1</sup> So much for the *second* section of the bill. In further support of what he had said in reference to the *first* section of the bill, he read the act of Congress giving to the legislative council of the Territory of Michigan the charge of the school lands there, and renewed his assertion that the first section of the bill before the house was "an exact transcript of the clause he had just read." And as to the third section of the bill before the house, that pertaining to the *university*, he read the act of Congress relating to Wiscon-

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 23, p. 443.

sin Territory, showing that the *third* section of the bill was "an exact copy of that act." And in reference to the whole bill, he repeated his affirmation that its principles were "identical with laws already passed in relation to the territories."

Having thus replied, and most successfully, as every impartial judge must admit, to the objections of his combined adversaries, and supported his defense of the bill by principles of natural justice, by the spirit and the essence of the law of pre-emption itself, by legal enactment, by historic precedent, and by public opinion, Mr. Sibley addressed himself, for a moment or two, to the pleasing task of paying his parliamentary respects to the Hon. Mr. Bowlin, chairman of the Committee on Public Lands. In the most emphatic manner, he challenged the verity of Mr. Bowlin's statement that the Committee on Public Lands had passed upon and condemned, in advance, the particular provisions of the bill. Alluding to Mr. Bowlin's indirect imputation that the early settlers of Minnesota had gained their lands dishonestly, and now seek legislation in favor of men who violate law, he replied: "I do not know what the gentleman might intend to convey by such remarks, but it was evident that he was totally ignorant of what material the population of the Territory of Minnesota was composed. The hostility the gentleman had shown throughout to every measure that had been proposed for the benefit of the Territory of Minnesota, was not very characteristic of the magnanimity he had the reputation of manifesting when the interests of his own section are at stake. Minnesota did not ask for more than she was strictly and justly entitled to, and he hoped that what she had the right to would not be withheld from her. She did not expect to receive more benefits or privileges than other portions of the Union, but she did expect equal justice. I am not conscious that any statement I have made could have rendered Minnesota liable to such a charge as seemed to be implied by the gentleman from Missouri. I hope that gentleman will be able to explain this matter in a way which shall not carry with it any such imputation as that which might be inferred."<sup>1</sup>

A portion of the debate, especially February 6, 1857, was very exciting, and, in some respects, betrayed the bitterness of party spirit that seemed, at times, to array itself against both Minnesota and her delegate. When the second section

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 23, p. 444.

of the bill was under discussion, viz., the section authorizing pre-emption rights to *bona fide* settlers on the school lands, Mr. Sibley had said that although *no existing law* granted pre-emption to settlers on unsurveyed lands, yet "every man who settled on the unsurveyed lands had *virtually* a pre-emption. No man dare dispute his right."

MR. STEVENS of Pennsylvania "would like to ask the gentleman why they *dare* not do it? Was there any law that prohibited it?"

MR. SIBLEY said that "there was no law of the United States, but there was a '*higher law*' (great laughter), and that was the settler's '*higher law*' of the West, in all matters that involved the homestead and dearest rights of men. And, *as such*, it was recognized by Congress when, from time to time, laws were passed by that body, to effect the same object, by granting pre-emption rights to actual occupants of the soil."

MR. WENTWORTH: "When a man squats upon the school lands there is a '*higher law*' that takes him off. So far as I am concerned, whenever a territorial bill comes up here, containing a provision in relation to school lands similar to that contained in this, I shall feel compelled to oppose it. I would leave the matter to the townships. If the townships are organized and choose to let men squat on their school lands, it is their business, not the business of Congress." This was a stroke at the third section of the bill, that is, in relation to the university, in reply to Mr. Bowlin's attempt to distort the meaning of Mr. Sibley's words in reference to a "*higher law*."

MR. SIBLEY said he believed "the gentleman knew very well what he (Mr. Sibley) referred to, in the remark that he made, in reference to a '*higher law*.' He referred to a *usage*, of no more common occurrence in Minnesota than in any other Western state or territory. And that *usage* was that the man who had first gone forward and settled unoccupied lands, who had been, as it were, the pioneer of civilization, should be protected from being turned off the soil that he had settled and reclaimed. There was no other '*higher law*' in Minnesota than that."

MR. FITCH (supporting Mr. Sibley) replied to certain objections. "It is true that the bill legalizes pre-emption to public lands prior to survey, but that is no hardship. To my certain knowledge, those pre-emptions have been recognized, if not by positive legal provisions, at least by the settlers

themselves, almost from time immemorial. The objection to leasing the school lands, on the ground that the value would be diminished by loss of *timber*, is vain. It assumes that all the school sections are timbered sections; that the delegates from Oregon and Minnesota, the legislatures, and the people, have conspired to rob their own constituencies, and defraud their own institutions; and that the people of the territory are not as good guardians of their own interests as the Committee on Public Lands. On the contrary, by the lease of the lands, their cultivation will be rendered certain, their value enhanced, and the school fund increased."

MR. STEVENS moved to strike out the word "Minnesota." "I make," said he, "this motion for the purpose of destroying the section. Any man who squats upon the public land before it is surveyed is entitled to no pre-emption rights. He is a trespasser, a wrongdoer. The bill proposes to give the wrongdoer a right to take possession of lands devoted to a sacred charity,—if I may call it 'charity,'—for school purposes. I believe there is no law which gives a right of pre-emption to settlers on unsurveyed lands. I may, however, be wrong in this."

MR. FITCH: "You are decidedly wrong."

MR. STEVENS: "I am informed by the gentleman behind me that there is no law which gives pre-emption rights to settlers on unsurveyed lands, but the 'higher law,'—which the gentleman from Minnesota speaks of,—the law of the *bowie-knife*. Now, I think we ought not to recognize *that* kind of a higher law at any rate. If we are to recognize a 'higher law' *above*, we are not to recognize, at any rate, a 'higher law' *below*. I cannot go for that. I hope the whole bill will be killed."

MR. SIBLEY said that the "higher law" to which he referred was not any law of violence, nor that of the "bowie-knife," as stated by the gentleman from Pennsylvania, nor a law from "below," but the law of public opinion, of public sentiment; a higher law which he believed existed elsewhere than in Minnesota. This public opinion was, if he might so term it, *Omnipotent*, and any enacted law affecting the rights of person or property, antagonistic to it, would always prove a dead letter. This public opinion in the West was in favor of granting to the settler on unoccupied, and even unsurveyed, land the full benefit accruing from the bestowal of the soil he



had improved. "The gentleman has asserted that we have no right to protect a wrongdoer, and that government ought not to protect settlers on unsurveyed lands who have no business there. *But the settlement of the greater portion of our Western country, and the mighty advancement of that region in wealth, population, and power, had all been the result of the encouragement given by the government to settlers on unsurveyed lands, by the passage of pre-emption laws from time to time.*"

Such, however, was the political passion of the hour, that, notwithstanding the unanswerable argument of Mr. Sibley, and the prestige of the passage of the bill by the senate, none opposing, and its recommendation by the senate's Committees on Public Lands and Territories, and by the house's Committee on Territories, yet the motion of Mr. Stevens to strike out "Minnesota" from section 3, and of Mr. Vinton to strike out "pre-emption" from section 2, and of Mr. Bowlin to strike out "lease" from section 1, prevailed. The bill did, indeed, seem mortally wounded, in fact "killed." By subsequent effort, however, it revived, and, reduced to *two* sections, the first authorizing the territorial governors and legislatures to "protect" the school sections, the second setting apart "*two townships*" for the *university*, was passed by the house, February 6, 1851, the senate concurring therein February 15, 1851. Congress thus, by a self-contradictory act, denied pre-emption to settlers on unsurveyed lands, and withheld authority from the legislatures and governors to lease the school sections. Had the senate refused to concur in the house amendments, *all* had been lost. Plainly, party passion ruled the house. The situation could not be accounted for by the supposition that a few individuals might reap a benefit not enjoyed by others, for others were not entitled to enjoy it, not being pioneers. Nor was it that the bill was seriously obnoxious to valid criticism. The principle it advocated was a just one, sanctioned not only by natural right, but even by divine precedent, which not only asserts that "the laborer is worthy of his reward," but even exalts the law of nature and necessity above any human legislation adverse thereto. A king of Israel ate shewbread "not lawful" for any but the priests to eat; and a greater than the son of Jesse "plucked ears of corn" on the Sabbath, not his own by statute but by natural prescription. All things exist for the benefit of man, and not man for the benefit of them. Institutions are made for men, and not men for institutions. Lands, governments, and laws



must be subjected to this one eternal rule, or laid waste, and overthrown. The rights of man, as man, are the rights of nature, and all enactment must be subordinate thereto. And this is a divine enactment voiced through all the changes of history, and revolutions of empires and states, in a universal "public opinion" which is only another name for a "higher law," and, contrary to which, congresses and parliaments may not run except upon pain of incurring judgment as just as it will be severe. Mr. Sibley was clearly in the right. Had even adverse legislation prohibited pre-emption to van-con-riers of the nation's wide-expanding civilization, yet the rights of natural justice voiced in the universal conscience of man are ever superior to any positive statutes conflicting with the same. The law of moral righteousness is one to which all governments must submit, repealing whatever resists the same, or go out extinguished in blood. The best engraved political right, carved in the text of the Constitution itself, if adverse to it, is powerless before it. The greatest of Roman orators, Cicero, a statesman and philosopher as well, less Pagan than some who aspire to the Christian name, maintained that the "*common sense of mankind*," "*communis sensus hominum*," is a law imperial and indestructible, not one thing at Athens, another at Rome, but constant everywhere, a voice infallible, supreme, and always the same. By virtue of that, the Bastille was overthrown by a French mob. On that ground the Gracchi won for themselves a name, and Socrates drank the hemlock regardless of death. On that same ground, Mr. Stevens himself, his friends, and the whole party of freedom in the North, with an inconsistency most glaring, while denying pre-emption rights to the pioneer whose toil had enriched the public domain, resisted the execution of the "Fugitive Slave Law" which ran counter to "public opinion," though armed with constitutional enactment.<sup>1</sup> Clearly the house

<sup>1</sup> *Notes*.—So Mr. Giddings, December 2, 1850, opposing the "Fugitive Slave Law," said frankly: "Sir, I will say to the president, with all kindness, but with unhesitating confidence, that our *people* will never submit to be compelled to lend aid or assistance in executing that infamous law; *nor will they obey it*. The president should have learned, ere this, that *public opinion*, with an enlightened and patriotic people, is stronger than armies and navies, and that he himself is but the creature of the *people's* will. Nor is this doctrine new. In every state of the Union statutes have been enacted which never have been and never could be enforced, *but remained a dead letter, so opposed were they to the public sense of justice and propriety*."—Globe, Vol. 28, Appendix, p. 254. Such was the "higher law," good for Messrs. Giddings, Stevens, and Vinton, in regard to the "Fugitive Slave Bill," but bad for Mr. Sibley in regard to the "Pre-emption Minnesota Bill!" The fact is that the doctrine of a "higher law" was the doctrine of both North and South, of Calhoun as well as of Sumner, a universal law, the Roman "*jus primum*," underlying all society, a law grounded in the moral constitution of mankind, the final corner stone of states and nations.

resistance to pre-emption was the result of a passing prejudice. As a matter of fact, pre-emption in advance of survey had already been previously legislated in effect, and practically recognized, as had also the power of territorial officers and legislatures to lease the school lands. The right, also, of the "Squatters," as they were called, in the technics of the times, to determine their own institutions was undeniable, under the Constitution of the United States, neutral enough and liberal enough as it is, to let in all manner of Paganism and Barbarism, under the national flag, provided only it comes in a republican way, as Mormonism did, and knocked at the door of Congress with a meek petition in its hand. Douglas' doctrine of what was called "Squatter Sovereignty," though disrelished by Free Soilers, on the one side, as not positively excluding slavery from the territories, and equally distasteful to secessionists, on the other side, as not positively including it, was, nevertheless, a true doctrine under the Constitution. Clearly, had the constituency of Mr. Sibley—the Minnesotians—been of the creed of New Mexico or California, Wentworth and Stevens had not resisted the grant of pre-emption already accorded to like situated settlers in Iowa and Wisconsin; and had they been of the creed of the Texans or Missourians, Bowlin and Burt had not objected to what, in principle, had already been conceded to Florida and Michigan. But, being pioneers, and mostly of the Douglas creed, the opposition came from both sides of the house, and was persisted in, even after its mouth had been silenced by the unanswerable argument of Mr. Sibley. And it will remain a mystery, one of those phenomena which sometimes startle us, in history, that the representatives of the great State of Ohio, first born of the ordinance of 1787, and so consecrated to freedom, should ever have been found, like Vinton, Schenck, Giddings, and Root, resisting and opposing the delegate from Minnesota, a territory secured to freedom not only by the same ordinance, but by the Missouri line, and moreover by climatic law. The fact abides. No answer to Mr. Sibley's reply was ever attempted. What he was enabled to effect was the grant of authority to the territorial legislature to "protect" the school lands, and the donation of "two townships" of land for the use and support of a university. And throughout the whole debate, he stood aloft, in Congress, as the foremost champion of the rights of the pioneer, as already he had been of the rights of the injured and insulted red man.

The remaining subject that called forth another speech of Mr. Sibley, as the second session of the Thirty-first Congress drew near its close, was the debate on the "Indian Appropriation Bill." This occurred February 20, 1857. At the special request of many representatives, he spoke, in general, upon the Indian question, and particularly with reference to certain provisions of the bill looking to, and legislating, the reorganization of the Indian department. He adverted to the increased responsibility of the nation toward the Indians since the territorial acquisitions of Oregon, California, and New Mexico, commending highly the abandonment of Indian "sub-agents," and employment of only "full agents," men of education, accomplishment, and sterling moral principle; and not characters whose main business was to secure the signature of an Indian chief to a treaty, then disregard its solemn stipulations, and anxious, more than all, to enjoy for themselves, and send home to the Indian office, "a large supply of champagne, sardines, and other good things." No wiser words ever fell from the lips of any representative than fell from his, when referring, in his speech, to the actual condition of the Indian, he said:

"That condition is a very wretched one. This government still forbears to adopt a course with regard to these miserable dependents, which a due respect for its own honor and character, and the promptings of a wise and enlightened humanity, would dictate. If, in place of expending millions upon millions in keeping up a large military force to hunt the Indians with swords and bayonets, as is now the case in Texas and New Mexico, the government would place in the hands of the commissioner of Indian affairs—to be applied to feeding, clothing, and educating, the remaining tribes—one-fifth of the sum now required for the support of an army, it would soon be found necessary to employ no force at all. The result would prove that these beings are actuated by the same motives as are other men, and that when this government ceases to regard and treat them as outcasts and enemies, they will be grateful for and appreciate its motives. To test the sense of the house on this subject he (Mr. Sibley) would endeavor to gain the floor before the adjournment, with a view of moving that the bill presented by him, at the beginning of the session, 'for promoting the civilization of the Indian tribes in Minnesota Territory,' be taken up and put upon its passage. If Congress shall pass such measures as it proposes, the time will speedily arrive when this government may safely dispense with any display of military force on the border to protect it from savage aggressions, for, under its operation, the Indian himself will be as prompt to uphold and sustain the majesty of those laws which extend to him civil and political rights as are other citizens."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 28, p. 619.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE THIRTY-SECOND CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION, 1852.—MR. SIBLEY AGAIN RETURNED TO CONGRESS BY A CONSTITUENCY COMPOSED OF ALL PARTIES.—GREAT NATIONAL AGITATION.—THE “COMPROMISE MEASURE.”—DISRUPTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES.—COMPOSITION OF CONGRESS.—CRIMINATION.—RECRIMINATION.—MR. SIBLEY’S POLICY.—REASON OF THIS.—HIS “AMERICAN HOUSE LETTER.”—HIS ADDRESS TO HIS CONSTITUENTS.—DEVOTES HIMSELF TO THE INTERESTS OF MINNESOTA.—SPECIAL BILLS INTRODUCED.—PETITIONS.—MEMORIALS.—INCESSANT LABORS.—APPROPRIATIONS SECURED FOR MINNESOTA, BY HIS UNWEARIED DILIGENCE, AND INFLUENCE; IN ALL ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THREE DOLLARS AND FORTY-THREE CENTS, UP TO DATE.—ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE DEBATERS ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE.—POSITION AS TO THE SALARIES OF TERRITORIAL OFFICERS.—UTAH AND BRIGHAM YOUNG.—VINDICATES THE RIGHTS OF MINNESOTA.—CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.—HIS SPEECH ON EXECUTIVE CONTROL OVER TERRITORIAL OFFICERS.—CARRIES HIS POINT IN THE HOUSE.—THE SENATE CONCURS.—DEFENSE OF THE HOMESTEAD BILL.—ASSAILS THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.—RESUMÉ OF HIS POWERFUL ARGUMENT.—IMITATES CHATHAM.—EULOGY UPON THE PIONEERS.—PROPHETIC UTTERANCES.—MAN’S RIGHT TO THE SOIL AS WELL AS TO THE SUNLIGHT.—THE CITIZEN’S RIGHT TO A HOME.—RESISTS THE ILL-ADVISED BILL FOR THE INDIGENT INSANE.—AGAIN PROTECTS THE LANDS OF MINNESOTA AND THE RIGHTS OF THE SETTLERS.—RESUMÉ OF HIS ARGUMENT.—FINE PERORATION.—THE BILL DEFEATED.—MAY 21, 1852, A GREAT “FIELD-DAY.”—FIVE MINNESOTA ROADS IN DANGER.—APPROPRIATIONS IN PERIL.—INTENSE OPPOSITION.—INTENSE REPLY.—THE BATTLE AS TO CONGRESS, THE CONSTITUTION, AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.—MR. SIBLEY, SINGLE-HANDED, BEARS THE BRUNT OF THE ONSET.—A TRUE JEFFERSONIAN.—RESUMÉ OF HIS ARGUMENT.—FINAL CONFLICT, JUNE 8, 1852.—DESPERATE STRUGGLE.—MR. SIBLEY MOVES THE “PREVIOUS QUESTION.”—VICTORIOUS BY TWO MAJORITY!—MINNESOTA’S FIVE ROADS SAVED!—SENATE CONCURS.—HIS AMENDMENT TO THE INDIAN APPROPRIATION BILL.—OPPOSITION.—REPLY.—ELOQUENT APPEAL IN BEHALF OF THE “STARVING INDIANS.”—BASE ACTION OF CONGRESS.—COMPLIMENT BY JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS.—NOBLE SUPPORT FROM MR. VENABLE.—ETERNAL DISGRACE.

THE THIRTY-SECOND CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION, 1852-53.—COMPOSITION OF CONGRESS.—SLAVERY EXCITEMENT.—FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW A FINALITY.—MR. SIBLEY STILL AVOIDS COLLISION AND DEVOTES HIS ENERGIES TO MINNESOTA INTERESTS.—NEW BILLS INTRODUCED FOR THE BENEFIT OF MINNESOTA.—RAILROAD BILL.—MILITARY POST AT ST. JOSEPH.—EXTINGUISHING OF INDIAN TITLES.—FURTHER APPROPRIATIONS FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS.—SUPPORT OF SCHOOLS IN FRACTIONAL

TOWNSHIPS.—THE INDIGENT INSANE.—APPROPRIATION FOR SURVEYS, CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS, SALARIES OF TERRITORIAL OFFICERS, TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE, CONTINGENT EXPENSES; TOTAL ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS.—GRAND TOTAL OF APPROPRIATIONS DURING MR. SIBLEY'S CONTINUANCE IN CONGRESS, TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIVE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THREE DOLLARS AND FORTY-THREE CENTS.—PROJECT OF A GRAND NATIONAL RAILROAD, CONCEIVED BY MR. SIBLEY, FROM THE GULF OF MEXICO TO THE BRITISH LINE AT PEMBINA.—RESUMÉ OF MR. SIBLEY'S ARGUMENT.—HIS COMPREHENSIVE VIEWS.—GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE.—PERORATION.—LAST APPEAL BY MR. SIBLEY FOR A RAILROAD FROM THE RAPIDS OF ST. LOUIS RIVER, LAKE SUPERIOR, TO ST. PAUL.—CONCLUDING REMARKS AS TO HIS CONGRESSIONAL CAREER.—HIS CHARACTER AS A STATESMAN.—HIS PERSONAL RELATION TO THE WHOLE BASIS AND SUPERSTRUCTURE OF THE TERRITORY AND STATE OF MINNESOTA.—"PRIMUS INTER PARES."—MINNESOTA'S OBLIGATIONS TO HER FAITHFUL SERVANT.

THE thirty-second Congress of the United States, and to which the Hon. Mr. Sibley was again returned, with enthusiasm, by a large vote from persons of all political parties, convened December 1, 1851, and closed its first session August 31, 1852. The country was still convulsed with the throes of the anti-slavery agitation, an excitement intensified by the passage of the celebrated "Compromise Bill," during the previous session, which admitted California as a state without slavery, the territories of Utah and New Mexico without the Wilmot proviso, fixed the western boundary of Texas, giving to Texas a large sum for the surrender of her claim to jurisdiction over New Mexico, declined to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, though abolishing the slave trade in the same, and enacted special legislation for the more vigorous enforcement of the fugitive slave law. The supreme efforts of Webster and Clay were powerless to allay the storm the passage of the compromise aroused. Moral principles began to insist on their recognition as living factors paramount to all positive legislation, and to demand the repeal of enactments at variance therewith, although supported by the text of the Constitution and the terms of union. On the one hand, stood the opening clause of the Declaration of Independence; on the other the right of the master to the rendition of the fugitive, inscribed in the Constitution itself, the organic law of the land, and now sought to be enforced by federal power according to compact between the states. It was a polar antagonism between ethics and politics, two opposing forms of civilization, struggling

each to secure the preponderance of power in the nation for coming time. Conventions were held everywhere in the North, and petitions prepared for Congress praying for the repeal of the fugitive slave law. To promote such movements Seward and Chase gave all their influence. Breaks began to be made in the ranks of both the great national parties. Of 82 Democrats who voted for the fugitive slave law, 28 were from the North, and of these but 12 were returned to the Thirty-second Congress. Of 76 Whigs from the North, only 3 voted for the law, and, of these, but 1 was returned. Of 32 Whig representatives from the State of New York, none voted for the law, and all were returned. Every Democratic senator from the North, save 2, evaded the vote. Marked changes occur now in both the houses of Congress. While the great lights of the senate still shine in their places,—a Douglas, Davis, and Cass; a Clay, Seward, and Chase; yet both Webster and Calhoun are missing, and a Sumner and Wade put in an appearance. In the house, the men of mark are still there,—a Stephens, Gentry, and Toombs; a Clingman, Seymour and Giddings; a Stevens and Venable; yet Wilmot has disappeared, and J. C. Breckenridge and Hendricks are admitted to their seats. In the senate, notwithstanding all changes, the Democrats count 38 to Whigs 24, a Democratic majority of 14. In the house, the Democrats count 142 to Whigs 91, a Democratic majority of 51 in the house, and of 65 on joint ballot.

Again, as before, the contest for speaker commanded public attention. The Hon. Thaddens Stevens of Pennsylvania was nominated as representing the Whig party, the Hon. Linn Boyd of Kentucky being nominated as the candidate representing the “compromise measures.” A formal demand was instantly made to learn how far, or to what extent, the Whig party had repudiated these measures, and, upon humble presentation of caucus resolutions declaring that the party accepted the same, it was as boldly announced, by others of the same party, that these resolutions were worthless and vain. The South accused both Whigs and Democrats in the North of affiliation with the abolitionists. The North accused the South of seeking to make slavery national. The result of the long debate was that, upon the appeal of Mr. Giddings, the oldest member of the house, the debate terminated, the clerk called the roll, the Hon. Mr. Boyd being elected speaker by a vote of 118 out of 213 votes cast, 107 being necessary to a choice.



As a delegate from Minnesota, not yet admitted as a state, Mr. Sibley had no vote in any of the legislation connected with the "compromise measures." Elected, moreover, as the candidate of no political party, nor upon any party issue, even after party lines had been drawn in the territory, but returned to Congress by votes from all parties, upon the sole ground that, of all others, he was the man to serve the best interests of Minnesota, and the only man to save them from threatened disaster, the knowledge of which was made known to him, it behooved him to still pursue the wise policy he first adopted, and eschew, as far as possible, all political conflicts at the seat of the federal government. At the close of the previous Congress he had issued an "address" to his constituents, counseling them not to allow party politics to distract their elections, but, at present, until the territory became more advanced, to remain united as a people, laboring in concert for no party ends, but for the general good, and enforced this by the fact that, such was the temper of the times and the excitements at Washington, every interest of Minnesota would be endangered, or impeded, if not absolutely sacrificed, were the delegate to Congress trammelled by imposed obligations to declare himself a party man, on either side. Still further, even after the formation of political parties in the state, and his expressed purpose not to be a candidate for re-election, he was written to, and waited on, at Washington, prior to the close of the Thirty-first Congress, and urgently persuaded to retract his purpose, and allowed his name to go before the people a third time, as that of their candidate for the Congress ensuing. He yielded, assigning his reasons in an "*Address to the People of Minnesota*," issued from Washington, July 29, 1850; and, although unable to leave his post there without jeopardizing the interests of the territory, and wholly absent from the canvass, nor contributing one dollar to its conduct or support, he was, in face of conspiracies and oppositions not creditable under the circumstances, elected triumphantly, and returned the third time to the national legislature.<sup>1</sup> Having already, in what was known as the "*American*

In his "address," July 29, 1850, he says, — after recounting the oppressive and unwearied labors undergone, during the two previous sessions of Congress, and his announced determination to retire from congressional life, — "I have been a *working man*, thus far, through life, but never have been called upon to undergo labor so incessant and so exhausting as during this and the preceding session of Congress. It will be naturally asked, why then have I any desire to return here as the delegate, after the expiration of my present term of service? I have two reasons only to assign why I have consented again to go before the people as a



*House Letter*," in response to the committee of the Democratic convention that waited on him, declared his sentiments, as a "Democrat of the Jeffersonian School," he yet distinctly asserted that, having been elected by both Whigs and Democrats, he would "in no event depart from a course of strict neutrality, as to political issues, in the discharge of public duties to the people of the territory." Guided by such judgment, he, at once, when Congress met, directed his attention to his work, and instantly gave notice of his purpose to introduce the following five bills, (1) "to grant certain lands for the construction of a railroad from the falls of the St. Louis river of Lake Superior to a point on the Mississippi river;" (2) "for the construction and continuance of certain roads in Minnesota Territory;" (3) "for the appointment of a surveyor general of public lands in Minnesota Territory;" (4) "for the removal of obstructions to navigation in the Mississippi river, above the Falls of St. Anthony;" and (5) "for the establishment of an additional land district and new land office in the Territory of Minnesota." December 16, 1851, he presented the claim of the Minnesota Volunteers to "compensation for service in suppressing the Winnebago hostilities in July, 1850." January 5, 1852, he introduced the "bill to grant the right of way, with donation of public lands, to aid in the construction of a *railroad* from the St. Louis river of Lake Superior to St. Paul," and on the fifteenth of the same month introduced "a bill to grant to the several states of the Union the proceeds of certain public lands for the relief and support of the indigent insane therein;" these bills being referred to the proper committees. The day following he presented "the claim of B. Baldwin, and five others, to compensation for injuries caused by being driven from the military reserve at Fort Snelling." February 2, 1852, he introduced a resolution "that the Committee on Public Lands be instruct-

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candidate for re-election. The *first* is that many of my friends, *irrespective of party*, have urged me so to do; the *second* is my entire conviction that one or more of those who have been announced as probable candidates for the station I now hold, seek to be elected, *not for the advancement of the territory and its interests, but to subserve private ends and selfish purposes*. I have toiled too long and too faithfully for Minnesota to be willing to see its destinies committed to such hands, if by any sacrifice of my own inclination or comfort, I can avert from it such evil. Being necessarily absent from the canvass, I must expect, therefore, to be assailed by every device and weapon my opponents can bring to bear against me. Some, I feel assured, will not descend to detraction or abuse to endeavor to bring about my defeat. From others, who are announced as aspirants to the same office, I may not expect, nor do I ask, any forbearance. If elected, I shall labor with the same zeal and diligence which have thus far characterized my course. More than this I can neither promise nor perform."

ed to inquire into the expediency of devoting the proceeds of Fort Snelling military reserve, when sold, to the benefit of the *University of Minnesota*, in lieu of a like number of acres of land already granted by Congress for the same purpose, and to report by bill or otherwise;" — and, next day, more clerks being necessary for the dispatch of official business in the territories, he introduced a "bill to amend certain acts for establishing the territorial governments of Oregon and Minnesota." March 3, 1852, he presented the petition of J. W. North, and others, praying for "the reduction of rates of postage on newspapers and periodicals, in order to facilitate knowledge." April 1, 1852, he introduced a resolution "to establish a military post on the Upper Mississippi;" — Fort Gaines, now Fort Ripley. Again, April 14, 1852, he introduced a resolution in behalf of settlers who had settled on the school lands, inadvertently, previous to survey, that said settlers might be "allowed to enter such lands upon payment of the minimum price, the territory being permitted to select other lands of equal value in lieu thereof," — a resolution adopted and referred to the Committee on Public Lands. April 25, 1852, he presented the petition of G. W. Campbell, and others, that "the government engineer be authorized to change the route of the road from Point Douglas to the falls of the St. Louis river, so that it shall pass by Bowle's Mills instead of by Cottage Grove," and on the twenty-ninth the petition of A. E. Ames, and others, praying "that a pension be granted Anthony Page." May 3, 1852, he gave notice of his purpose to offer an important amendment to the senate bill, then under discussion in the house, with reference to the salaries of territorial officers, and the penalty to be incurred in case of neglect of their duties, by reason of unnecessary absence from the territory. June 7, 1852, he introduced a "bill to authorize the legislative authority of the territories to control appropriations that may be made by Congress for the support of the government of said territories;" while, June 14, 1852, at his suggestion, the Hon. Mr. Dodge of Iowa introduced into the senate a "bill for the benefit of Minnesota Territory and State of Iowa," the same bill having been ruled out from consideration as "territorial business," by the house, on the ground that the *railroad* projected therein was not confined to the Territory of Minnesota. June 22, 1852, he presented "the memorial of Davis Cooper, and others, a

committee of trustees of Cottage Grove Academy, Minnesota, praying for a grant of land for the establishment and maintenance of that institution." June 28, 1852, he introduced a joint resolution "to purchase the half-breed tract on Lake Pepin in Minnesota Territory." August 25, 1852, he presented the claim of W. Dahl "for compensation as assistant marshal in taking the census of the territory in 1850."

This almost unexampled diligence and devotion of Mr. Sibley to the interests of his constituents was furthermore evidenced in the earnestness with which, laboring incessantly among the various committees of both houses, and with the leading members of Congress, he was enabled to secure the passage of so many measures during the same session of Congress, and of so great importance to the Territory of Minnesota. Chief among these was the passage, by the senate, of the bill already passed by the house, for further appropriations for the erection of public buildings in the territory; the bill for the appropriation of certain lands for support of schools in townships and fractional townships not heretofore provided for; the bill for further appropriations for the construction of roads in the territory; the bill to reduce the military reserve at Fort Snelling; the bill to provide for the survey of the Mississippi river above the Falls of St. Anthony; the bill to amend certain acts in the act establishing the territorial governments of Oregon and Minnesota, and whereby a larger clerical force was granted to each, with additional appropriations; the act establishing a new land district and officers, such officers appointed by the president, the senate concurring; the change of the name of the St. Peter's river to that of Minnesota river; the bill to authorize the legislature of the territory to control the appropriations Congress might make to the same; and various amendments and suggestions, from time to time, made to the civil and diplomatic, the deficiency and Indian bills, whereby valuable pecuniary benefits were secured to the government and officers of the territory, and various claims, both individual and collective, were satisfied.

As the "delegate from Wisconsin Territory" he had secured, in the bill passed by Congress for the establishment of the Territory of Minnesota, \$45,000 as the first federal appropriation to the territory. As the "delegate from Minnesota Territory" he had, in the Thirty-first Congress, secured, still

further, the appropriation, during its first session, of \$40,000 more to aid in the construction of roads, and, during its second session, \$34,000 more to meet the necessities of the territorial legislature and judiciary, the support of the superintendent of Indian affairs, and contingent expenses. Now, during the first session of the Thirty-second Congress, the amounts appropriated, through his influence, were, for contingent expenses of the legislative assembly, \$8,000; expenses of treaty with the Mississippi and St. Peters Sioux Indians, for extinguishment of their title to lands in Minnesota Territory, \$4,272.38; expenses of treaty with the Indians and half-breeds for extinguishment of their title to lands on the Red River of the North, \$901.05; by amendment to the deficiency bill, meeting expenses for printing, binding, and revising the "Revised Statutes" of the territory, and for extra clerks, \$8,000, making in all an appropriation of \$21,173.43 during the first session of this Congress; or, thus far, since his entry into Congress, a total of \$140,173.43.

More frequently than ever, during this session, does Mr. Sibley appear on the floor of the house, entering into the lists of debate, on vital questions of territorial rights, federal policy, and interpretation of the Constitution. The occasions that furnished opportunity for the exhibitions of his knowledge, wisdom, far-reaching sagacity, broad statesmanship, love of justice and humanity, fidelity to sacred trusts, and which displayed his parliamentary skill, were numerous and oft-recurring. Wherever a "principle" was involved in legislation that affected, directly or indirectly, the interests of Minnesota, or of territories in general, there he was found, ever ready to defend the true against the false, the right against the wrong, the wise against the foolish. Already he had vindicated his right, as a territorial delegate, to equality with the representatives from the states, save as to the one item of voting, and manfully maintained and practiced it. His speeches and remarks on the jurisdiction of the Committee on Territories; the bill for appropriation of moneys for the construction of roads in Minnesota Territory; for the support of the territorial legislatures; for the construction of military roads, in view, not merely of present need, but of future contingencies; on the harbor bill; on the duties and salaries of territorial officers; on the claims of the Menomonie Indians; on the Indian, and the general appropriation

bills; on the homestead bill; all prove him to have been, even before he reached his prime, one among the readiest, clearest, most courteous, and effective debaters in the house, and, not less, one of the ablest, best-informed, wisest, most upright and humane, as well as liberal, sagacious, and accomplished members of the National Congress.

His views in reference to the duties and salaries of territorial offices were neither doubtful nor obscure. Faithful and diligent in his own ministerial office as the servant of the people, he required like fidelity and diligence in others, especially in the territorial officers whose constant presence in the territory was a necessity, and the prompt discharge of whose duties was indispensable to the welfare of the people. Great laxity in this respect had hitherto prevailed in certain cases, and great inconvenience to the settlers dwelling at such distances, and whose causes could only be adjudged by a federal judiciary. The abuses under the old law, which placed no restriction upon the officers of the territory, had become enormous, and given to the president of the United States more trouble than any other matter that came under his proper supervision. The question,—one of great delicacy and magnitude,—how long territorial officers might absent themselves, and especially judicial officers, from their posts of duty, had swelled to unusual proportions, and led to special legislation. In passing the general appropriation bill, March 3, 1851, Congress had inserted a proviso depriving territorial officers of their whole salary for the entire year, in case of absence from the territory for more than sixty days in one year. The senate bill relating to the salaries of the territorial officers, under discussion in the house, May 3, 1852, sought to repeal that proviso and enact a forfeiture of salary only equal to that accruing during the period of their absence, unless cause could be shown for the same, and deemed satisfactory to the president; in short, enacted full compensation for the whole period of absence, provided the president should adjudge the reasons for such absence satisfactory to himself. Against this, the house's Committee on Territories reported an amendment, virtually a substitute, so as to retain the old proviso, yet conceding the judgment in the case to the president,—an amendment reported to the house at Mr. Sibley's suggestion. At various dates the discussion became quite animated, and enlisted a large number

of representatives. It was complicated, moreover, by the outrages in Utah Territory, under Brigham Young, the remoteness of the region, and the virtual expulsion of the federal officers from its bounds. Inflexible, however, to the principle involved, viz., the duty of the officer to be present at his post, Mr. Sibley gave utterance to no ambiguous words on this occasion. He resisted the senate legislation, defended the house committee's amendment, and succeeded in securing the concurrence of the senate with the action of the house. His frankness and fearlessness and courteous expression are best seen in the light of his own words:

"My own territory," said he, "has suffered much from the absence of its officers, for months together. I think that the original proviso withholding salary from any officer who is absent for more than sixty days from his territory, without good cause can be shown for such absence, is a proper and a just one. I do not believe that the provisions purposed by the senate are sufficient to keep these officers at home, if they have a desire to absent themselves. \* \* \* These provisions do not meet my approbation. They effectually annul all previous legislation on the subject, providing that every officer who absents himself, for a period of sixty days or more, from his post during the year, shall *not* lose his salary for the whole year, but merely the *pro rata* compensation for the period he may be absent. That, I contend, is not sufficiently precautionary in its character. The Committee on Territories, replacing the clause in its original form, now provide that, if an officer is absent *any time*,—nothing said about sixty days,—from the field of his official duties, he shall lose his salary for the *entire year*, *unless* he can procure a certificate from the president that he had good cause of absence. I regard this as absolutely necessary for the protection of the public interests of the people of the territories. If officers accept office in the territories, for which they are well paid by the government, they ought to be willing to remain there and discharge their legitimate duties. I am in favor of making the provision as stringent as is consistent with justice, and hold that if any officer absents himself, without good cause therefor, he should not be paid one dollar of his yearly salary. I am anxious that the provisions of the bill may be made sufficiently strong to secure the people I have the honor to represent against the evils of a continued absence of the judicial and other officers of the territory. The judges are vested with federal as well as territorial powers, and are the only officers who can issue *habeas corpus*, and other writs, act at chambers, and perform the other duties of superior courts. I trust the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Stevens) will be satisfied with my explanation, and the necessity of such restrictions as are imposed by this bill. As to the removal of a territorial judge by the president, so far from the concession of such power to the president, it is a mooted question, at this moment before the senate of the United States, and many eminent jurists deny that any such power exists. Be that as it may, and even admitting that such a power does exist, there are grave reasons why it should be exercised only in



extreme cases; for, if the territorial judiciary is subject to be displaced arbitrarily, and without good and sufficient cause, it ceases to be independent of executive control, and will speedily be converted into a mere political engine, and no longer be depended on, or respected, by the people."<sup>1</sup> [Here the hammer fell.]

A wiser, calmer, more compact, convincing, or appropriately expressed argument and opinion in the case fell not from the lips of any of the twenty speakers who took part in this discussion. It carried weight with it. Like the effective "*cæterum censeo*" of the elder Cato, it accomplished its end. The house amendment was carried almost unanimously, and June 9, 1852, the senate receding from its own propositions concurred with the action of the house.

Not less emphatic were his utterances in defense of the homestead bill, whereby, under a radical alteration of the old land legislation, he hoped successfully, with others, to resist an effort earnestly made to defeat the bill. The bill was a bill to encourage agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and all other branches of industry, by granting to every man who is the head of a family, and a citizen of the United States, a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres of land out of the public domain, upon condition of occupancy and cultivation of the same for a period of two years. The opposition to the bill was grounded in the following arguments: (1) That by the sale of the public lands the wealth and revenues of the general government would be diminished; (2) the taxation of those not benefited by the sales would be correspondingly increased; (3) the past prosperity of the nation, under the old policy of limited sales at high prices, was sufficient vindication of its prosperity; and (4) that the bill was tinctured with socialistic and agrarian principles, dangerous to the welfare of the republic. As against this reasoning Mr. Sibley directed one of the grandest, though brief, and ablest efforts of his congressional career. He assailed the *existing policy* of the government (1) as uneconomical. With a public domain of *fourteen hundred millions* of acres of land, the average sales, per annum, but little exceeded *one million* acres, whereas free grants of land to actual settlers would so swell the number of consumers of foreign goods as to greatly increase the duties on imports, and so compensate for any diminution in the receipts, from the sale of the public lands. (2) It was avaricious. It grasped, for the

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 24, Part 2, pp. 1286, 1410, 1418.



benefit of the government, its immense unoccupied possessions with the tenacity of a miser, and conflicted with the political axiom in all popular governments that such governments should remain poor, however prosperous the people might become. (3) It was rigid and exacting. It sold the land at high rates, and next imposed a tax of twenty dollars per annum, which was a new and unjust charge upon production, raising the natural price, while yet the whole cost of the public lands was less than twenty-two cents per acre, the government making a clear profit of more than one dollar per acre on all that was sold. "If," said Mr. Sibley, "an individual capitalist should take advantage of his wealth to monopolize, and hold at exorbitant rates, any article indispensable to the subsistence and comfort of the community in which he lives, he would justly be denounced as a wretch unfit to associate with honorable men. And yet, in no respect, would he be more heartless, or worthy of blame, than a government which exacts from its citizens a fivefold price for those lands which are absolutely necessary for their support." (4) It was self-impoverishing. "It is a fact," said he, "that the increase in the sales of the public lands has by no means kept pace with that of the population, since the foundation of the government. (5) It was productive of crime and corruption. The high rates of sale had forced thousands upon thousands to remain in the corrupting atmosphere of our large cities who otherwise would have become contented and happy tillers of the soil." (6) It was cruel to the pioneer. "He is pursued with unrelenting severity as soon as he has broken the silence of the primeval forest with the blows of an American axe. After enduring all his privations, and subjecting himself to the perils incident to his vocation, he who has toiled for months in honest labor, suddenly finds himself clutched by the law, as a trespasser on the public domain, and bereft of the proceeds of his long winter's work, for the benefit of his *paternal* government, or rather, for the advantage of its minions. For, these outrages in Wisconsin and Minnesota are sanctioned by the same government that permits the public lands in California and Oregon to be overrun by foreigners who appropriate to their own use what is *upon* as well as *under* the earth, without hindrance. The time is at hand when the arbitrary exercise of power, such as I have alluded to, will be rebuked by the people. Nor will it long be endured that the immense

public domain shall continue to be barred against those who have not the means to pay for tilling the ground God has given to all his creatures, but of which the avaricious temper of the government has hitherto deprived even its own citizens." (7) The bill under discussion is true Democratic doctrine. "I repel with indignation," said Mr. Sibley, "the charge I have heard made, that the bill is tinctured with agrarian doctrines. Sir, when I see the honorable gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Chandler) so eloquent in defense of this bill, and sustained by such men as his colleagues (Dawson and Moore) and also by the chairman of the Land Committee and other gentlemen equally distinguished and conservative, and all in accord with the great lights of both parties of the country, particularly the Democratic party, I can but express my astonishment that any member could be found with boldness sufficient to denounce it as I have heard it denounced in this hall."

Such is only a meager *resumé* of the substance of this eloquent argument on the homestead bill. Like Chatham in the commons, Mr. Sibley held that "the true strength and stamina of a country are to be found, not in its trade, but in the cultivators of the soil, their simpleness of virtue, their integrity, and courage of freedom, men inured to labor, genuine invincible, the bulwarks of liberty, and the heart of a nation's power." He saw, what every statesman sees, that, after all a nation's wealth and glory always spring from, and return to, her soil. The proudest emporiums may decay by the diversion of trade, but a nation's greatness and permanence rest upon the self-dependence and the self-existence of her sons of toil.

"While trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,  
And ocean sweeps the labored mole away,  
This self-dependent power shall time defy,  
As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

"My life," said Mr. Sibley, "has been passed in the territories, upon the outer verge of civilization. *I have never spent a month in any state of the Union. I know the character of the pioneer, and the men on the ways of the West, and I speak understandingly when I say that it is such homesteads this bill will create which will ever remain the nurseries of that love of freedom by which alone our government can be perpetuated. In the hour of danger to the country, there will issue from the abodes of the working classes of your inland population, a power not only self-sustaining, but abundantly able to bear the hip*

*of State safely through all the storms that may beset her. If, then, the future hopes of the republic must rest, not upon the denizens of crowded cities, but in the masses who daily toil in the workshop and on the farm, there can be no doubt that the best policy to be pursued is that which favors the increase and prosperity of our industrial classes."*<sup>1</sup>

There is always something prophetic in the mind of a man naturally great. His conviction that a moral order rules the universe to which nations are subject, rewarding the right and avenging the wrong, never deserts him. His vision describes the "coming events" that "cast their shadows before." The voice here was like that of the ancient Gracchi, in the gathering storms of the Roman Republic. The homestead policy was that which alone could save a nation. It asserted man's right to the soil as well as to the sunlight and air. It denied that the public domain, bought by the common treasure of the people, or won by their valor, should be grasped and held by the government as a source of its own emolument, or devoted to monopolies and chartered corporations, against the interest of the laboring classes. It vindicated the citizen's right to a home, and that of the pioneer especially to the most liberal policy the government could devise. It smote the axiom of despots, and of writers in the interest of despots, that man, when entering society, surrenders his inalienable rights to life, liberty, and happiness, for the benefit of society, the support of tyrants, or a soulless abstraction. It lifted a protest against the existing policy which made the government an altar on which sacrifices were offered to the god Mammon, and demanded that Congress should no longer legislate in favor of the strong as against the weak, or elevate the lust of wealth to power in the hands of a few, upon the wail and woe of the struggling masses below. It was the sentiment of Washington, of the founders of the republic, of the Puritan stock from which Mr. Sibley came, the broad and open ground that the public lands, though appropriated, in a measure, to state needs and territorial improvements, were yet the treasure of the people, and that the federal policy should be one of "mercy" to the poor, — a "quality" that "is not strained," but

"Droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,  
Upon the place beneath; twice blessed;  
Both blessing him that gives and him that takes."

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<sup>1</sup> Globe, Appendix, Vol. 25, pp. 486, 487.

The passage of the homestead bill was another of the great victories in which Mr. Sibley bore a conspicuous part, and how rich a blessing it has been to the nation in the development of her resources, splendor, and strength, the public domain will remain a witness and monument forever.

The same fidelity, however, which enlisted the ardor of Mr. Sibley in defense of the homestead bill, exacted from him a vigorous and instant resistance to the bill for the indigent insane, on the same day, and same occasion. That bill, introduced by Mr. Bissell of Illinois, provided for "a donation of ten millions of acres of public lands to be apportioned among the states, in the compound ratio of their area and representation, for the relief and support of the indigent insane therein." It stipulated that each state having within its own limits lands of a "*suitable quality*" for this object, should receive its portion from the same, but states not having such lands should be "authorized to select from the public domain, *not in the other states, but exclusively in the territories.*" The like scheme had been presented to the previous Congress, but was first modified, at Mr. Sibley's earnest request, and then defeated. Revived now in substantially the same form, it was a second time resisted. Its advocates not only pressed the importance of providing for the poor unfortunates contemplated in the bill, but further urged, in support of the bill, that it would (1) protect the actual settler in his rights, (2) confirm pre-emption claims, (3) prevent states from selling lands at higher rates than the minimum price of the public domain, (4) restrict the locations to lands subject to private entry at the time of the passage of the act, and (6) give to the territories the right to tax the lands to be selected by the states. These shining baits failed to catch the delegate from Minnesota.

"Sir," said Mr. Sibley, replying to the plausible pretense, "I would not give a farthing for all the limitations, restrictions, and guarantees you can crowd into this bill. If the lands are once transferred to the states, the same majority that passes this measure will be found ready, when occasion offers, to scatter all these limitations and guarantees to the winds of heaven, and forbid the territorial authorities from imposing any tax upon such lands. I will venture the prediction that these lands will be managed without regard to any previous contract or agreement with the federal government, and without the least reference to the interests of the individual states. The actual settler will find himself under a foreign jurisdiction, and I turn with abhorrence from any project which would tend to place him in so humiliating a position."

Mr. Sibley resisted the bill on the grounds (1) that it created an invidious distinction between the states and the territories; (2) that it would delay the speedy admission of territories into the Union, as states; (3) that it would engender heart-burnings and internal strifes; (4) that it was unjust to the pioneer; (5) that the land states refused to allow any grants of public lands, within their own limits, to be made to other states; (6) that the reasons these states alleged for their resistance hold good as well for the territories; (7) that it is wrong for Congress to transfer to a state the title to lands in another state, and equally so to transfer to the same state the title to lands in the territories; (8) that Minnesota will resist the scheme with all the power at her command; (9) that Oregon, and all the territories, will do the same, and (10) that this whole matter of providing for the indigent insane, worthy as the object is, legitimately belongs to state jurisdiction, and the federal government has no right to engage in any projects of the kind.

These positions were maintained with great earnestness and warmth, and it was in this discussion, perhaps more than in any other, Mr. Sibley gave full rein to his power of unsparing utterance. Friendly to the object sought to be accomplished, the relief of the insane, and even willing that the government should do something in that behalf, if it so insisted, he proposed, as counter methods to those formulated in the bill, two different schemes; (1) "that the *proceeds* of the sales of the first 10,000,000 acres of public lands be equitably divided among the states for the relief of the insane," or (2) "that the land states be allowed to select their distributive share of the 10,000,000, within their own limits, and *issue scrip* to the other states in proportion to the amount they may be entitled to receive, to be sold but not located by them. This scrip would sell in the market for the same price as the land warrants, and the money be realized much more speedily than if the land itself was granted." But beyond this he would not go. He showed that twenty-one of the states had no lands in their limits that would be deemed "*suitable*" for the object specified; that of these, fifteen would come to Minnesota to "spy out the land;" that more than six out of the ten millions of acres would be selected here; and that war would begin. "I would be glad," said he "to know with what propriety the members from the land states can vote for such an

accumulation of evils upon Minnesota, when they will not entertain a proposition that another state shall hold one acre of public land within the confines of their own state. Alas! sir,

“ ‘Tis *all* men's office to speak *patience*  
To those who wring under the load of sorrow;  
But *no* man's virtue, or sufficiency,  
To be so moral when *he* shall endure  
The like himself.’ ”

Minnesotians are a peaceable and law-respecting people; but it may be well imagined that—after they have penetrated the wilderness, endured all trials and sufferings inseparable from the settlement of a new country, made sacrifices of every kind in advancing the interests of our beautiful territory, and built up towns by the labor of their hands—they would not be prepared to greet with much cordiality the emissaries of the states who might go among them to “spy out the land” which their own toil had made valuable, in order to secure its transfer to absentee proprietors, to the exclusion of the friends and former neighbors of the pioneers of the country! God knows, sir, that no man sympathizes more than I do in the sufferings of that unhappy class of beings,—the insane,—and no one would be disposed to make greater sacrifices than myself to ameliorate their condition. But, I know, also, that this bill is not the way to such an end. All that can be done by my gallant friend from Oregon, and myself, to resist it, will be done. And, I beg leave, in the name of the people whose interests have been confided to my keeping, most solemnly to *protest* against its passage. I invoke the aid of those representatives who are opposed to the exercise of doubtful powers by the general government, and of all friends of the territories, to arrest this scheme in its inception, and thus entitle themselves to the approbation of all who maintain the doctrine that

“ ‘Government, thro’ high, and low, and lower,  
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,  
Congreeing in a full and natural close  
Like music.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly necessary to say that the Bissell bill for the indigent insane did not pass, but met a second defeat as de-

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 25, p. 488.

cisive as the first. The vigor with which Mr. Sibley fought this scheme, so laudable in its aim, so plausible in its pretenses, and yet so dangerous in its method, was due to the fact that he had looked for powerful aid from the Hon. Mr. Hall of Missouri, as he says, "with much of the same confidence that the Trojans placed in Hector when they were pressed by the Greeks," but was "disappointed." It was due, therefore, to the blows of his own right arm, that the objectionable measure was repelled, and went staggering from the house never more to be heard of in the halls of Congress.

But there were other laurels in reserve for Mr. Sibley during this same session of Congress. Another battle, not less severe than the one through which he first passed to his seat in Congress, as the "delegate from Wisconsin," awaited him, and a victory not less complete, though won at greater risk. May 21, 1852, was a day in which the vital interests of Minnesota trembled in the balance. The question was whether the *five roads*, for which appropriations had previously been made by Congress, in the Territory of Minnesota should receive further appropriations for the continuance of their construction, or the work be discontinued by the federal government, and the burden of completion thrown upon the territory. In this debate the ablest members of the house participated. The bill asking \$45,000 more for such purpose had passed to its second reading, and the gravest objections were arrayed against it, on both economical and constitutional grounds. First of all, in substance, it was alleged that of the \$40,000 originally appropriated to this object, not a dollar had been spent as yet in actual construction, while nearly \$13,000 had been applied solely to surveys, leaving a balance of \$22,000 unexpended. Moreover, large contracts had been made while as yet large portions of these roads, if not all of some of them, remained still unsurveyed, and experience had shown that, to make appropriations, in advance of survey, a large balance still existing to the credit of the territory, was only an unwise legislation, and a needless consumption of money. Still further, it was useless to appropriate \$15,000 here, \$10,000 there, and \$20,000 somewhere else, instead of the whole amount at once, necessary to complete the roads, and which would be not less than half a million at the least. Additionally, it was urged that Minnesota Territory had become exorbitant in her demands.



The graver opposition, however, came from the argument against the power of Congress to make such appropriations. The bill was assailed, heavily, on the general ground of the impolicy of the federal government's making appropriations for any internal improvements, whether in state or territory. The two great political parties of the country were thoroughly divided on this great question. The Hons. Messrs. Houston of Alabama, Venable of Virginia, Stanly of North Carolina, Fowler of Massachusetts, Brookes of New York, and others, appealing to the authority of James Madison, who, in the First Congress of the United States, denied to the general government the power of making appropriations for internal improvements of any kind, resisted the bill on the ground of its unconstitutionality. Even conceding that Congress had power to construct military roads, yet these were not such, nor anywhere described as such. The departures of Congress from the Constitution should not be accepted as precedents for further infraction of that instrument. This piecemeal legislation for the purposes proposed was simply the extension of the "System of Internal Improvements," in its most odious form, into the territories, and should be defeated and abandoned now. There was no possible difference between legislating appropriations for five general roads in Minnesota Territory, and legislating for the same number in Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Missouri, or Ohio. To deplete the federal treasury for improvements in rivers, roads, and bridges, in the territories, one and all, was no way different from exhausting it, in reference to the states. The question was purely a question of the Constitution, and every member of the house well knew that to make appropriation of the federal money for the purposes of internal improvement, whether in state or territory, was not one of the powers ceded by the states to the general government. More than all, such legislation opened a wide door of temptation, and issued a broad card of invitation to "landsharks, speculators, railroad corporations, and companies of various kinds, to besiege the capitol and conspire with members of both houses of Congress to alienate the nation's prosperity to unprincipled monopolists, and cede to states and territories, under the plea of internal improvements, the public domain, which should be sacredly reserved for homesteads of the actual settlers in the territories."

Once more, and, as usual, the lot fell upon Mr. Sibley to sustain the whole defense of the bill, and bear the brunt of the whole assault. Save a few unimportant words, by one or two members of the house, and a kindly strong word of help from the Hon. Mr. Seymour of New York, the whole reply came from the delegate from Minnesota. The points of his reply were these: (1) As to the amounts of money asked for, they were less than the war department and the officer of the topographical bureau and the government engineer had estimated. And, because a balance existed to the credit of the roads, he (Mr. Sibley) had himself asked that the proposed appropriations should be reduced nearly one-half. (2) The roads contemplated are an absolute necessity, partly military in their purpose, and mostly to aid the pioneer in reaching the settlements accorded to him by the legislation of Congress. If the policy of granting homesteads to the settlers in the territories is a good one, not less good is that of providing the means of attaining them. (3) The construction of territorial roads is practically and essentially a part of the great system of national development to which the pre-emption laws pertain, affording facilities for rapid settlement in the West, and ought not now to be abandoned. (4) The Territory of Minnesota is inhabited by the largest and most warlike tribes of Indians on the North American continent, and these roads are necessary for the protection of the settlers. Moreover, if the government will but grant one-half what it costs to keep an army on the Northwestern frontier, the pioneers would take care of themselves, against any and all enemies, without expense to the government. (5) The construction of these roads will be the means of saving large sums of money to the general government, annually spent in transportation of supplies to its military posts and Indian agencies.

And, now, as to the constitutionality of these appropriations, Mr. Sibley, while asserting his fealty to old and time-honored democratic principles, even the principles of Jefferson, and Madison as well, and opposing rigorously the new and objectionable scheme of "Internal Improvements," called a part of the "*Great American System*," felt bound to challenge the judgment of the honorable gentlemen who had combined so strongly and so resolutely to oppose this measure. And (1) in reply not only to the honorable member from Alabama, but to all, he would humbly submit, that if these gen-

tlemen did *not* base their arguments against the bill on constitutional grounds entirely, they could urge no other reasonable objection; and if they did base their argument on constitutional grounds, the argument could only fail, since no such grounds existed. (2) From the organic relation of the general government to the territories, it was evident that Congress had the power to make the appropriations asked for. "The government," said Mr. Sibley, "is the sole great land proprietor in the territories, and bound by every consideration of equity and justice to make its domain accessible, by means of roads, to those it invites to settle there. How, sir, can your lands be sold, if the immigrant cannot reach them? Gentlemen will certainly not take the ground that the people of the territories shall make their own roads and those of the federal government likewise!" (3) From the uniform practice of the government. "For fifty years past, Congress has uniformly appropriated for works of this kind. The territories are placed by the Constitution of the United States under the direct legislation of Congress, and to Congress the pioneers have ever looked for legislative aid. By means of congressional grants of money in their behalf, rather than in behalf of the government's own domain, every territory, grown to be a powerful state, has been assisted in its small beginnings, and Minnesota must now be made the exception." (4) From the clear distinction between such legislation as is here proposed for the "territory," and that which the so-called "American System of Internal Improvements" proposes for the "states." From the foundation of the government the Democratic party has ever resisted the system of internal improvements, and from the foundation it has as constantly advocated "territorial appropriations." There is *no parallel* between the relation of the states and the territories to the general government. The former have attained to their majority; the latter still are minors and under the immediate supervision of parental care. The general government is bound to assist them. "The territories," said Mr. Sibley, "have invariably received liberal grants from Congress, for such purposes as this, and, *till now*, no attempt has ever yet been made to connect them with any system of internal improvements in the states. The distinction is too broad and too palpable to require anything to be said on the subject. The Democratic party, to which we belong, has never held the doctrines advanced by certain gentle-

men of that party on this floor. It has always been liberal in grants to territories. \* \* \* The two great parties of the country have indeed divided, on the question of so-called internal improvements, but never on the constitutionality of 'territorial appropriations,' and the attempt now made to confound these different kinds of legislation, ignore the uniform practice of the government, and appeal to party differences, is but an effort to invoke a party spirit whereby the bill before the house may be endangered and defeated." (5) From the "modesty" of Minnesota, in her requests, the appropriations ought to be granted. "Minnesota," said Mr. Sibley, "asks for no expensive lighthouses or harbor appropriations, and has the right to expect Congress to be generous with her, in regard to the construction of her roads and improvement of her rivers. Minnesota never has, and never will take undue advantage of your liberality. As an illustration of our modesty, sir, in that respect, I can point you to the fact I have adverted to that this bill provides for only *one-half* of the amount estimated for by the department, and I will be frank enough to say that I do not believe we should have received anything had I pressed for the whole amount mentioned in those estimates. I conclude by assuring the committee of the whole that the money is wanted, *now*, and I am satisfied it will be economically and properly disbursed."<sup>1</sup>

The final conflict occurred June 8, 1852, when the bill was put upon its passage, and the Hon. Mr. Stanly of North Carolina made one last effort against it, on the ground that the legislation sought was "partial and one-sided," "unjust to other territories," and that the bill should be referred to the Committee on Public Lands, to share the same fate with other bills, in the provision of some general system of appropriation which the country was expecting the committee to make. Otherwise, the continual drain upon the treasury by the territories would soon leave nothing to the states for sea-coast, harbor, and river improvements, or fortifications, or tariff. The earnest appeal of Mr. Stanly was promptly met by Mr. Sibley, who replied that he had not come to Congress to discuss any merely "abstract right of Congress to make appropriations of money for roads in the territories," but to insist on "the practice of the government from the beginning." "And," said he, "I beg leave to state to the

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 24, Part 2, pp. 1450-1455.

gentleman from North Carolina that the Territory of Minnesota has never received one acre of land, and never asked for one, except what was given her for educational purposes. She has never asked for anything unreasonable." Such his closing words on the so sharply debated question. With the eye of a general he saw the situation, and with the skill of a parliamentarian, knowing the critical moment had come, he added, "And now, sir, with this statement, and knowing that the house will not, under any circumstances, confound the system of internal improvement in the states with these territorial appropriations, *I move the previous question on the passage of the bill.*" It was a venture! Everything was hazarded! The motion was seconded, the *main question* ordered, the yeas and nays demanded, the result showing yeas 85, nays 83, a majority of two! But the bill was passed, and Minnesota's five roads and the appropriation of \$45,000 saved. The senate concurred with the house the ensuing session, and also passed the bill.

In any account of the actions of Mr Sibley in Congress, his noble stand, though unsuccessful, in behalf of the *starving Indians* of the Northwest, and the discussion evoked by his amendment to the Indian appropriation bill, may not be passed by in silence. It was July 17, 1852, the bill above mentioned being open for amendment, that Mr. Sibley rose and offered the following, the sum being first fixed at \$100,000, but now modified to \$50,000, viz., that Congress appropriate "for the subsistence of Indians of any tribe within the limits of the United States, who may hereafter be in a *starving condition*, to be expended under the direction of the secretary of the interior, \$50,000; provided, that in no case shall any portion of said sum be paid out unless upon reliable information made, to the secretary of the interior, of the existence of such a state of suffering among the Indians as is contemplated by this clause." A whole quiver of arrows was at once drawn, and shot, in rapid flight, at the proposition, the Hon. Mr. Phelps of Missouri twanging the first from his bow, and followed by representatives from various other states. The objections were these in the main: (1) That such appropriation was unauthorized by law; (2) that already we spend \$800,000 annually for the benefit of the Indians; (3) that the Indian department has not asked for it; (4) that Congress has no reliable testimony as to the alleged condition of starvation

among the tribes; (5) that to pass the appropriation is to set a precedent for the support of the Indians in general; (6) that it is a proposition "to feed wild Indians who support themselves by robbing and plundering emigrant trains, a premium offered to uncivilized men to plunder, tomahawk, and scalp our defenseless women and children;" (7) that there is no law regulating the conduct of the disbursing officer in such a case; (8) that we have Indian agents in the field, who, if such a condition of starvation existed, would have reported the same to the government; and (9) that such philanthropy as is shown in the amendment by the delegate from Minnesota ought at once to be exploded.

Curious enough were the varied modifications made to the amount specified, ranging all the way from \$100,000 to \$1!—first, \$100,000; next, \$50,000; next, \$1,000; next, \$1; next, \$5,000; next, \$20,000; next, \$54,000; next, \$56,000; the motions made for the sake of a speech, then successively withdrawn, until the amendment by Mr. Sibley was left unmodified to await the final vote. Not merely Minnesotians, but every lover of humanity, will be interested in the recital of Mr. Sibley's effort in behalf of the dying red man, his wife, and his children.

In reply to all, Mr. Sibley maintained (1) that the face of the bill itself, making already an appropriation of "\$10,000 for provisions for the Indians," proved an existing law warranting such appropriation; (2) that within the last few months, fifty or more individuals of the tribes had perished from actual starvation, and from year to year the suffering has increased to such an extent that whole bands of Indians have, through exhaustion from starvation, been deprived of locomotion; (3) that it is the duty of the government to bring succor, from its abounding treasury, to the aboriginal tribes whose land we have made our own, and who are perishing now from actual want; (4) that the disbursement of the money is sacredly guarded, and not to be spent except in the case stated; it is not a fund for the support of the poor, but a gratuity for the relief of the dying; (5) that the government placed no restrictions on the secretary of the interior in reference to his disbursement of its appropriation for missionaries to, and schools among, the Indians, but confided all to his wise discretion; (6) that there is not an officer in the Indian department that would not hail with delight, and com-



mend, such an appropriation; (7) that, although, this moment, no official document is found at the Indian office showing the starving condition of the Indians, yet he (Mr. Sibley) presented letters from reliable sources, upon which his statements were based, and that, moreover, from his own knowledge, he could testify to the extreme suffering in many of the Indian tribes; and that every consideration of humanity called for a speedy and effective response to the cry of the suffering from whom life was passing away for want of food. The moral sense of the best people in the land demanded it.

"Sir," said Mr. Sibley, warming to his theme, "the gentleman from Missouri has stated that this amendment is offering a sort of premium to wild Indians to scalp and tomahawk defenseless emigrants. I will say to that gentleman, sir, that he must be aware of the fact that the very reason why those Indians have become so desperate in their attacks upon the lives and property of the whites who are passing to California and Oregon, is because the action, or rather non-action, of the government has absolutely reduced them to the necessity of providing themselves with the means of subsistence by the commission of these outrages. Has not their country been made a thoroughfare for all the people who choose to pass through it, with or without their consent? Has not the game which furnished the principal food for these poor wretches been destroyed by you, or driven off, and the Indians thereby rendered desperate? Has the government provided against the inevitable result of such a state of things? Sir, the gentleman has made a great mistake in his assertion that the passage of this amendment will be virtually offering these Indians a premium to commit depredations. It will be attended with precisely the contrary effect. As to non-information at the Indian office, it is impossible that your Indian agents should be cognizant of everything that is passing amongst the Indians at a distance of hundreds of miles from them. They must depend upon the reports of missionaries, or traders, residing near them. I know that great suffering is endured by the Indians of the Northwest, and I presume the same scarcity of food exists elsewhere, in Oregon, New Mexico, California, or among the root-diggers of the Rocky Mountains, and I have been induced to present my amendment, that the proper authorities may have the means at command to relieve any such extremity of distress. And, now, having discharged what I conceive to be my duty, the fate of the proposition must be decided by the house. The facts are before you, and the *bare possibility of starvation* being endured by any within the boundaries of this republic should be guarded against without delay. If the Indians do not need relief, the money will remain in the treasury. If they do need relief, God knows that this Congress ought not to withhold it from them."<sup>1</sup>

There are times when even good men, and pious, feel somewhat profane, and Nature puts on her own fires, and the blood begins to boil, and a sensation, as of ants creeping from

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<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 24, Part 3, pp. 1826, 1827.



toe to scalp, is experienced. There are times when ordinary language is too poor to express the indignant protest the moral sense awakens against the conduct of men who, dead to every feeling of humanity, become guilty of moral abominations more atrocious than the outrages against which they affect to exclaim. That the thrilling appeal of Mr. Sibley should have proved powerless to move the house to extend its hand of relief to dying men, women, and children, whose lands the government had taken by force, and whom, by the lust for territorial expansion, and national power, it had reduced to homelessness and poverty, and maddened to desperation by a thousand wrongs, is one of the black stains, rather one of the *red* stains, that can never be effaced from the page of American history. The atrocity of the argument that the Indian must be exterminated unless consenting to wear our form of civilization; that the general government has no authority to relieve distress in its own peculiar domain; that it must turn a deaf ear to the wild man's cry, and that of his wife and famishing children, for bread; and that, if affording relief, it would be establishing a precedent to feed and support all the idle and lazy poor of the continent, speaks volumes of shame for the men who used it. The United States could vote, "*without estimates*" by any department, \$5,000,000, to relieve the starving Irish, and the victims of earthquakes in Central America could obtain instant relief. The cry of want wafted across the ocean, or the gulf, could be heard, for political effect, but the wild man's moan, the dying agonies of those whom the all-devouring rapacity of the government had driven from the graves of their sires, and in whose heart a rankling revenge had been left, must be hushed in death, rather than heard and relieved!

Mr. Sibley's exertion, however, was not without its effect. It kindled fire in more than one representative, and brought from Joshua R. Giddings a high compliment, saying, "My heart has responded to every sentiment that has fallen from the lips of the gentleman from Minnesota." The accomplished Mr. Venable from Virginia, supported Mr. Sibley in a most eloquent appeal. "Sir," said he, addressing the speaker, "God punishes crimes, and leaves to governments and nations to be the ministers of their own chastisements. Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Amalek have been swept away in his wrath. Other nations have experienced the same fate,

and the agitations of the civilized world indicate the progress of similar dealings on the part of Heaven. I desire, if possible, to avoid the cup of wrath which I fear is in store for us, as a people, for the wrongs inflicted on this unhappy race. I do not blame them for declining civilization at the hands of their enemies and oppressors. The civilization which leaves the perishing Indian to die, and withholds bread, deserves to be rejected by them. I shall vote for bread for these Indians, and in doing so I shall feel that I have done my duty." Similarly, the Hon. Messrs. Stanton of Tennessee, and Durkee of Wisconsin, supported Mr. Sibley.

But, vain was all the noble effort in behalf of the suffering and dying red man. The vote upon Mr. Sibley's amendment stood yeas 41, nays 76, to the eternal disgrace of the men who responded in the negative to such an appeal of humanity and philanthropy. All the brighter, however, glowed the diadem on the brow of the delegate from Minnesota. If he failed in carrying his amendment, he did not fail in his duty toward both God and man, nor fall short of a record that day, of which his children, his constituents, and the now State of Minnesota, may well feel proud, and the lustre of which will not pale while the "Star of the North" shines, unclouded, in the firmament of the National Union.

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THE second session of the Thirty-second Congress was opened December 6, 1852, forty-five senators and one hundred and eighty-eight representatives being present, and closed March 3, 1853. The constitution of both houses of Congress was substantially the same as during the previous session. The public excitement, in reference to the question of slavery, still continued, waxing more intense, all the more that, since the passage of the "Compromise Bill," the "Fugitive Slave Law" was announced as a finality, the two great political parties of the nation having met, the Democratic at Baltimore, the Whig at Philadelphia, the former resolving to "resist," the latter to "discountenance," all further agitation of the subject, whether in or out of the halls of Congress. The opening of the second session of the Thirty-second Congress was, consequently, a peaceful one, the lull, however, before the coming storm.

Regardless of all political contentions, and standing aloof from all collisions, intent only in seeking the territorial development and welfare of Minnesota, Mr. Sibley devoted his attention and energies to the completion of the work begun by him, determined, in his own mind, not to be a candidate for future re-election. He had, as a non-partisan citizen, laid, by his unwearied labors, the foundation of a great state, and desired, for reasons satisfactory to himself, not indeed to abandon the political school whose doctrines, as to the administration of the government, he cordially accepted, but to abide free from the heated and bitter animosities which now, more than ever, began to divide the dearest friendships, and sunder the most loyal constituencies. Not to mention a variety of resolutions offered by himself, and a number of memorials and petitions of inferior moment in the history of his career, presented to the house, Mr. Sibley, January 4, 1853, gave notice of his purpose to introduce two bills, viz., (1) a bill granting to Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa, as states, and to Minnesota Territory, the right of way, and a portion of the public lands, "for the construction of a railroad from New Orleans to the northern boundary of said territory, with a branch to the Falls of St. Anthony;" and (2) a bill making appropriations "for the removal of obstructions in the Mississippi river above and below the Falls of St. Anthony, and in the Minnesota river." As the purest and best of public men are never beyond the venom of public detraction, and the governor of the territory had been openly charged with the misappropriation of funds designed for the conduct and execution of Indian treaties, Mr. Sibley, conscious of the governor's rectitude, caused a resolution to be introduced into the senate, to-wit, that "the Committee on Indian Affairs be instructed to inquire into the falsity or correctness of the public allegations," in reference hereto, and be "authorized to send for persons and papers." February 12, 1853, he presented the memorial of one hundred and eighty-two citizens of Pembina county, in Minnesota Territory, praying for the establishment of a military post at St. Joseph, "for protection against attacks of Sioux Indians, and against incursions of the Hudson's Bay Company into the Territory of Minnesota, in defiance of existing laws." In connection with this, he presented a petition

from the same as above, praying "for the negotiation of a treaty extinguishing the Indian title to lands in the valley of the Red River of the North."

Among the various measures passed by Congress in relation to Minnesota Territory, during this session, were (1) various amendments offered by Mr. Sibley to the civil and diplomatic bill, whereby important pecuniary advantages accrued to the territory, the senate concurring in the same; (2) the house bill for the further appropriation of money to aid in the completion of the public buildings of the territories of Minnesota and Oregon; (3) the house bill for the support of schools in fractional townships; and (4) the house bill for the survey of the Mississippi river above the Falls of St. Anthony. In these legislations the senate likewise concurred. The bill for the purchase of the "Half-breed Tract," at Lake Pepin, was lost, on account of legal informalities attending the signatures of the petitioners, and other technicalities. The bill for the indigent insane was defeated by the folly of men, who, not content to allow the states the "proceeds" of certain lands, or "land scrip," equal in value to the distributive share of land for each state where no public domain existed, sought to secure the appropriation of the land itself for the purpose specified. The effort of Mr. Sibley, however, to protect the public lands, on the one hand, and, on the other, to relieve the indigent insane, was only another proof of his wisdom and humanity, not appreciable by many with whom he had to deal.

The appropriations made by Congress, during this session, to Minnesota Territory, were, for surveys in the territory, \$45,000; for continuance and construction of roads, \$45,000; for salary of governor, judges, secretary, and superintendent of Indian affairs, \$9,700; for contingent expenses of the territory, \$1,000; for compensation and mileage of members of the territorial legislature, officers, clerks, etc., \$20,000; for territorial library, \$500; for completion of public buildings, \$25,000; making a total of \$145,500. This amount, added to the amount already appropriated to the territory since Mr. Sibley's entrance into Congress, viz., \$140,873.43, makes a grand total of \$285,673.43, secured in five sessions of Congress, for a constituency whose census numbered, at first, not over 5,000 souls. This was certainly vigorous and influential work, and

a result achieved, at every step of the way, by persistent struggle, against prejudices at times wellnigh insuperable, and odds wellnigh overwhelming.

Of the remarks and speeches of Mr. Sibley made during this session of Congress, his utterances on the great project his mind had conceived, of a national railroad extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the northernmost boundary of the Territory of Minnesota, traversing the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, and the Territory of Minnesota, present him as one among the foremost men of his times, in his conception of the oncoming greatness of the country's expansion, west of the Mississippi, of the needs of its almost miraculously increasing population, and of the incalculable benefits, not only to states through which it might pass, but to the nation at large. The scheme of such a gigantic highway running from South to North was only paralleled by the magnificence of the scheme of a Pacific railway running from West to East, and strapping the continent together with its iron bands. The bill of which he had given notice January 4, 1853, asking the right of way and donation of public lands for the road from a point opposite New Orleans, to Pembina, provided for a right line of 1,500 miles in length, or, allowing for deviations and deflections, 1,800 miles in all, of which 500 should lie in Minnesota, 275 in Iowa, 350 in Missouri, 300 in Arkansas, and 370 in Louisiana, the total grant, in alternate sections, 10 miles each side of the road, and situated 100 miles west of the Mississippi, being 12,032,000 acres of land, equal, at market price, to \$15,040,000;—a road which, if constructed, would bisect all the great lines of contemplated routes from the shores of the Pacific to the great Father of Waters, and be the basis of a series of connections and intercommunications North, South, East, West, and between, in every direction, without a parallel anywhere in the world, opening to commerce and trade, through twenty degrees of latitude, a region of country unsurpassed in fertility, and boundless in resources of mineral wealth. It was a magnificent scheme, born of a mind which, though modest, and self-depreciating, was yet capable, as such minds are, of great things. *Tenui, conamur grandia!*

The arguments by which Mr. Sibley supported this grand project were (1) that, as yet, the immense region west of the Mississippi had been comparatively neglected; (2) that the

natural waterways were insufficient for the development of the country, and artificial lines of commerce were an imperative necessity for the people, and a measure of public economy for the government; (3) that, not only the power of Congress under the Constitution, but the duty of Congress, to dispose of the public lands for the benefit of the greatest number of citizens, without injury to any, was unquestioned, and that the greatest of statesmen and strictest of constructionists had so maintained; (4) that the West would not long endure the recent doctrine of the older and Atlantic states, viz., that the government was fast becoming too liberal to the younger states, and that no aid should be given to the latter unless the older received an equivalent for their votes in favor of such assistance, but would soon assert, and make good, its right to reward for the great toil and sacrifice of its people, in reclaiming the wilderness, and turning the forest into a fruitful field; (5) that the present time was most favorable to the undertaking, the financial condition of the country flourishing, the stocks in the market unusually high, capital everywhere seeking investment, millions of treasure locked up in banking establishments waiting employment, and all things auspicious for railroad enterprises; (6) that the accomplishment of a work like this would be less difficult than, and equally important with, the scheme of the Pacific railroad from San Francisco to Memphis, Tennessee, with its several branches terminating at St. Louis, Dubuque, New Orleans, and Matagorda bay, Texas; a project involving a main trunk line of 2,000 miles, or, including its branches, 5,115 miles, requiring an appropriation of 97,536,000 acres of land, at a market value of \$121,900,000.

These condensed reasons, given almost *verbatim*, in the terms of Mr. Sibley's speech, covered, in the main, his argument in behalf of the road, upon constitutional, economical, and interstate, as well as national, grounds. Then, proceeding to depict the practical advantages of the enterprise, if completed, he indulged his chaste, simple, and flowing style of expression, in the most beautiful manner, as was always his wont:

"Imagination," said he, "can hardly depict the magical effect which the completion of this work would have in developing the resources of the West, and in adding to the aggregate wealth of the nation. The valuable fisheries of Lake Superior would be increased in a ratio tenfold, were a

market thus opened to the South. The pineries of Minnesota and Wisconsin would send forth, annually, their inexhaustible supply of building materials to the valley below. The iron, salt, and coal of Missouri, and the copper and lead of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, could thereby be exchanged, with advantage, for the products of the rich and "Sunny South." The immense tracts of public lands, scores of miles each side of the railroad, now with no purchaser, because of their remote position from the water-courses, would be taken up, at once, by an industrious and enterprising class of settlers, admirably calculated, as the whole of that region is, for the support of a dense population."<sup>1</sup>

Looking at the result from a military point of view, he continued:

"If the longitudinal line of communication along that border were perfected by means of a railway, the government could control the savage tribes with much greater facility than now can be done, and with less than half the force now requisite for that purpose. The same reasons might be urged as one of the necessary preparations against the occurrence of a foreign war. I know, sir, that many regard that as an almost impossible event. I am not one of that number, for I can well imagine that we may be forced to resort to that so much to be deprecated alternative, at any time, to defend the honor, or the rights, of the nation. Grave senators have assured us that our foreign relations are in a delicate position, and I am bound to believe they are not alarmists, or actuated by any vain spirit of boasting, when they make that declaration. I am not in favor of filibustering expeditions, but I do trust that the high position of this republic will be sustained and vindicated, and the Monroe doctrine strictly adhered to, even at the hazard of a war with France, England, or any other power. And I feel assured that the incoming administration will enforce this cardinal policy of the Democratic party, indeed, sir, I may say, of the whole American people. Should hostilities follow, we ought to be prepared to repel the intrusion upon our soil, of an enemy's force, with the whole power of the country. Were the projected railway from North to South completed, it would enable the government to concentrate, in a few days, thousands of the best marksmen in the world, at any point on our Southern coast that might be threatened by a foreign foe."<sup>2</sup>

The last appeal of the Hon. Mr. Sibley, as he closed this exhaustive speech, so full of information, and so grand in conception, was in behalf of the bill he introduced previously, asking the right of way and donation of lands for a railroad from the rapids of the St. Louis river of Lake Superior to St. Paul, with branches to St. Anthony (Minneapolis) and Stillwater:

"That bill," said he, "is now on your calendar, and I wish briefly to state the necessity that exists for its passage. The distance between the termini is about two hundred and sixty miles, and much of the country

<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 27, Appendix, pp. 188, 189.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 189.



through which the road would pass is very favorable for settlement. The great object is to open a communication between the waters of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, and it is one of immediate interest to every state bordering on the latter river, and upon the lakes. Congress granted 750,000 acres of land, at its last session, to the State of Michigan, to enable it to make a canal around the Falls of St. Mary. Complete the measure of your liberality, and, I may say, of your justice, by contributing to the infant but enterprising Minnesota, from your ample resources, your proportion of means necessary to build a railway between the northern and southern portions of our territory, through what is now little better than a trackless wilderness. We who live on the waters of the Mississippi are now absolutely cut off from communication with our own lake coast, for want of a railroad. To reach that part of our territory, without resorting to the primitive mode of conveyance by bark canoes and portages, we must descend the Mississippi, nearly four hundred miles, to Galena, thence to Chicago, and through the whole length of Lakes Michigan and Superior, and a part of Lake Huron. In other words, we must travel more than 1,500 miles to visit a portion of our territory, not more than two hundred and fifty miles distant, in a direct line. The disadvantage to the government and to the Territory of Minnesota, in view of the need of frontier defense, and transportation of troops, and also of provisions for your Indian agencies, is manifest. Complete, then, the measure of your regard for the people I have the honor to represent on this floor. Give us your aid to free us from our difficulties, and I can safely promise that Minnesota will soon be knocking at your doors for admission into the Union, with a population inferior to none of her sisters, in virtue, intelligence, enterprise, and devoted attachment to true democratic principles, and to the government under which we live."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the earnest, practical, eloquent appeal of the delegate from Minnesota, in behalf not only of his great project of a national highway from the Gulf to the British line, but in behalf of the immediate needs of his own constituency; nor anywhere, in coming days, let the debates in Congress be searched and read with whatever care, will the future historian of Minnesota be able to find a cause more cogently pleaded, or couched in terms more direct, simple, select, or graceful, or pervaded by a spirit more pure from selfish ends, or supported by an intellect more broad, comprehensive, and grand. The rights and needs of the territories, the expansion and the possibilities, nay more, the anticipated actualities, of the rapidly developing civilization of the country, and the hovering dangers arising from foreign envy of American greatness, as also from Indian hostilities, all loomed before him, evincing the grasp and scope and magnitude of his thought, and finding utterance in a quality of wisdom, afflu-

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<sup>1</sup> Globe, Vol. 27, Appendix, p. 190.

ence of diction, and, at times, tenderness of feeling as well as strength of expression, and beauty of imagination, which, combined with the dignity of his personal presence and courtly manner, won for him golden opinions from all who heard him. If he did not succeed in all he attempted to do, it was not for want of ability, tact, or influence, but alone from the temper of the times, the narrowness of men, and a partisan spirit which never could soar higher than the thought of a local need, or sectional prejudice, and whose utmost creed was freedom for the *black* man, deceit or extermination for the *red* man, and tardy justice to the pioneering *white* man.

The last act of Mr. Sibley in Congress was his third appeal, March 3, 1853, in behalf of a poor woman whose husband had fallen in the service of the government, the presentation of the petition of Emily Hove, and the request that the senate bill for her relief might at once be taken from the table of the house and passed, granting her the half-pay of captain for five years.

With this act of justice and humanity Mr. Sibley closed his congressional career. Judged by his official record, he stands as one of the ablest, purest, and most faithful of public servants, devoting his manhood, talents, attainments, and wondrous experience, as the prince of pioneers, to the service of his constituents, through five consecutive terms of Congress, from December 3, 1848, to March 3, 1853, four years and three months, under the successive administrations of Presidents Polk, Taylor, and Fillmore. His congressional career was one perpetual struggle, from first to last, in behalf of Minnesota. Nothing that he won for the territory was gained without a battle. Not a bill was passed without opposition, nor a benefit secured without a running conflict. From his entrance to his exit, he succeeded, by the power of his personal presence, his commanding talent, parliamentary skill, and the loyalty of certain influential senators and representatives whose friendship and help he had conciliated to his own advantage. None stood more resolutely and unflinchingly in the gap than he, none more quickly appreciated a crisis in debate, and none wielded more effectively, or frequently, the "previous question" against his opponents. And yet, nothing remained to him as a source of unmixed pleasure more delightful than this, that, in all his conflicts, however warm, at times,

as they were, nothing ever occurred to mar the individual friendships or social relations that existed between himself and those against whom he was called to contend. The record of his congressional career is strewn with the highest compliments, publicly made, and from all parties, to his personal candor, love of truth, fairness in debate, frankness, ability, manliness, moral courage, and high integrity. Even his opponents could say that, on the score of personal courtesy alone, he deserved every dollar he demanded for his territory. And how much Minnesota owed to his faithful exertions, perhaps only the early settlers are aware. To him, beyond all other men, Minnesota is indebted for the name of the state; for the change of the name of St. Peters river to Minnesota river; for the location of the capital of the state at St. Paul and not at Mendota, his own home; for the opening of the first roads in her territorial life; for the passage of the bill that gave her a name and a place at all in history; for appropriations to build her capitol, territorial prison, and to lay the foundation of a territorial library; for the first movement toward the provision of relief for the indigent insane; for a double portion of land devoted to educational purposes; for two townships of land for the use and support of a university, secured to her while in her territorial condition; for a new land office, and new land district; and the first movement for a railroad connecting the waters of the Mississippi and Lake Superior; and for appropriations amounting nearly to \$300,000. This is more than presiding at the birth of a territory. It is giving birth to the territory itself. Viewed in whatever light, the Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, underlies, in his person and work, the whole civil and political superstructure of the State of Minnesota, and this, without the least disparagement to the just merits of others with whom he was associated, will be accorded, in future, as already it has in the past, by his fellow citizens, and the unanimous voice of all pioneers. And, whether we view him as battling to secure his seat in Congress, and the rights of a constituency sought to be deprived of government and representation alike; or as securing the passage of the bill establishing the territory; or as resisting, on every side, all partisan inducements in the trust committed to his charge; or as providing for the defense of the frontier, and the protection of the wives, children, and homes of the early settlers, from hostile Indian attack; or as

pleading for pre-emption; or defending, with eloquent tongue, the rights of the pioneer, and championing the cause of the red man against a government loaded with guilt, he will ever stand, in the history of Minnesota, as the man on whose shoulders, more than on the shoulders of all others, rests, as on a deep foundation stone, the proud edifice that now bears the name of the "State of Minnesota," and on whose brow glitters the "Star of the North" with a light not less effulgent than his own.

## CHAPTER VII.

MR. SIBLEY'S POST-CONGRESSIONAL CAREER, 1853-1860.—HIS PRESENCE NEEDED IN THE TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE.—GIGANTIC SCHEMES OF ROBBERY.—ELECTED TO THE HOUSE.—CORRUPTION OF THE LEGISLATURE.—MINNESOTA & NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY.—ENORMOUS CHARTER AND FRANCHISE.—GOVERNOR GORMAN'S PROTEST, THOUGH SIGNING THE BILL.—MR. SIBLEY'S FORESIGHT BEFORE LEAVING CONGRESS.—"PROVISO" TO THE MINNESOTA LAND BILL.—POPULAR INDIGNATION AGAINST THE SPECULATORS AND THE LEGISLATURE.—GRAND RAILROAD EXCURSION.—BOOM, JUNE, 1854.—MAGNATES OF THE UNITED STATES IN ST. PAUL, CLERICAL AND LAY.—THE FEASTING AND DANCING.—SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 1854.—RAILROADS AND THE MILLENNIUM.—INVITATION BY ROBERT OWEN TO MEET IN LONDON TABLED ON MOTION OF MR. SIBLEY.—FRAUD IN THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN RELATION TO THE MINNESOTA LAND BILL.—INVESTIGATION.—GOVERNOR GORMAN'S FORMAL PROTEST.—VETO OF THE BILL.—LEGISLATURE DEFIES CONGRESS.—AMENDED BILL PASSED OVER THE GOVERNOR'S VETO.—BRIBERY.—DYNAMITE DOCUMENT PREPARED BY MR. SIBLEY, EXPOSING THE FRAUDS IN THE LEGISLATURE.—SENT TO CONGRESS.—OPINIONS OF EMINENT LAWYERS IN THE STATES.—POWER OF CONGRESS OVER THE TERRITORIES.—THE CHARTER ANNULLED BUT THE GRANT OF LAND SAVED.—POPULATION OF MINNESOTA IN 1857, 150,000 TO 200,000.—SEEKS ADMISSION AS A STATE.—ENABLING ACT.—CONVENTION TO FORM STATE CONSTITUTION.—INTENSE EXCITEMENT.—SLAVERY QUESTION.—KANSAS.—NATIONAL CONGRESS.—SCENES IN ST. PAUL.—STRUGGLE TO OBTAIN CONTROL OF THE CONVENTION.—TACTICS.—DIVISION.—TWO CONVENTIONS THE RESULT, REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC.—MR. SIBLEY PRESIDENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.—THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA IS THE ADOPTED REPORT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE.—RATIFIED BY CONGRESS.—MINNESOTA ADMITTED AS A STATE.—GRIEVOUS DELAY.—TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE EMBARRASSED.—MR. SIBLEY ELECTED THE FIRST GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.—HIS INAUGURAL.—DENUNCIATION OF BASE CALUMNY.—JOHN SHERMAN OF OHIO.—THE GREAT PANIC OF 1857.—FINANCIAL RUIN TO MINNESOTA.—SALUTARY LESSON.—THE STATE RAILROAD BONDS.—CELEBRATED "FIVE MILLION LOAN" TO CERTAIN COMPANIES.—THE CONSTITUTION ALTERED.—THE PEOPLE INSANE.—HIS EXCELLENCY, GOVERNOR SIBLEY'S FIRST ANNUAL MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE.—THE HONOR AND CREDIT OF THE STATE TO BE PROTECTED.—GOVERNOR SIBLEY DECLINES TO ISSUE THE BONDS UNLESS UPON CONDITION OF DEPOSIT OF FIRST MORTGAGE BONDS, AND

PRIORITY OF LIEN SPECIFIED.—REASONS ASSIGNED.—MANDAMUS GRANTED BY SUPREME COURT, JUDGE FLANDRAU DISSENTING.—BONDS ISSUED.—THE OPINION OF JUDGE FLANDRAU.—WARFARE UPON THE BONDS.—SHAMEFUL DISASTER.—DEFAULTING COMPANIES.—WRECK OF THE WHOLE RAILROAD SCHEME.—TARNISHED HONOR OF THE STATE.—THE REPUBLICAN PRESS.—GOVERNOR SIBLEY'S CONDUCT.—LAST ANNUAL MESSAGE, DECEMBER, 1859.—"PESTILENCE" BETTER THAN "REPUDIATION."—GOVERNOR SIBLEY'S RELATION TO THE BONDS.—INFLUENCES WHICH MADE THE STATE REPUBLICAN.—OTHER INTERESTS THAN THOSE OF RAILROADS.—DEVOTION OF GOVERNOR SIBLEY TO THE INTERESTS AND HONOR OF THE STATE.—HIS CHARACTER AND ADMINISTRATION A MODEL FOR HIS SUCCESSORS.

PHENOMENAL CONDITION OF THE WORLD IN 1860-1862.—SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—SPIRIT OF FREEDOM REVOLUTIONIZING STATES, EMPIRES AND CONSTITUTIONS.—FINAL ANTAGONISM OF SLAVERY AND LIBERTY COME.—OMENS.—CIVILIZATION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CHANGING FRONT.—FREE DISCUSSION.—GOVERNMENTS SIFTED.—"MAN AS MAN."—FOUR POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES.—THEIR CREEDS.—STRIFE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH.—STATE SOVEREIGNTY.—EX-GOVERNOR SIBLEY'S ATTITUDE.—THE CELEBRATED CHARLESTON CONVENTION, APRIL 23, 1860.—CONDUCT OF EX-GOVERNOR SIBLEY.—FAITHFUL TO DOUGLAS, THE FRIEND OF MINNESOTA.—MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS.—CONFLICT.—SOUTHERN ULTIMATUM.—SECESSION.—BALTIMORE.—EX-GOVERNOR SIBLEY'S LOYALTY TO THE FLAG.

THE period of Mr. Sibley's civil and political career, next following his retirement from Congress, and extending to the close of his administration as governor of the State of Minnesota,—that is, from March 4, 1853, to January 1, 1860, a period of seven years,—was crowded with scenes and events not less important to the territory than those of the period preceding. Returning to his home at Mendota, he at once gave his attention to his private affairs, and began the work of closing his business relations to the American Fur Company of which he was still the head.

The condition of things in the territory, however, was such that the need of his presence in the legislature was universally felt. As might be expected, in the almost incredibly rapid development of the country, gigantic schemes of robbery were on foot, plans to plunder the domain of the pioneer, and to the success of which the legislature itself was sought to be subsidized, and who, but a tried and trusted leader, could thwart them? Induced by his friends, he once more allowed his name to go before the people, and at the election, October, 1854, was returned from Dakota county as a member of the

Sixth Territorial Legislature. This testimonial of high regard was as deserved as it was opportune. The hearty election of Mr. Sibley was only an additional mark of public esteem, and all the more pleasing, because it occurred amid new political combinations, the conflicting attitude of what were known as the "Fur and Anti-Fur Companies," the corruption of the legislature by the influence of Eastern railroad capitalists, the increasing agitation of the negro question, the steps toward the formation of the Republican party, the ambition of men for honors in the territory, and the schemes of men to secure a seat in the National Congress; — a condition of things that divided friends who before stood firm and united.

The times were full of enterprise, and daring unmatched in the previous history and legislation of the territory. The fifth session of the legislature met, January 4, 1854, in the new capitol building, and, next to dead of night following the last day of the session, March 4, 1854, passed an act incorporating the "*Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad Company*," with powers and franchises of Titanic magnitude. The charter gave to the company, at whose head stood the notorious firm of the Messrs. Schuyler of New York, a title to all the lands that *had been, or ever after might be*, donated by Congress to Minnesota for railway construction; a title, in fee simple, forever, to a body of stockholders, almost all of whom were non-residents of the territory. The excitement was intense. Inch by inch, the bill had been battled, throughout the whole session, by a brave minority, and was passed "an hour and ten minutes before the time fixed by law for adjournment," and sent to the governor, who, contrary to expectation, signed it, without examining its details, yet under protest, saying, "*I leave the whole responsibility upon those who passed it.*"<sup>1</sup> It was petroleum upon the population, and the Lucifer match that touched it was the fact that along side the names of the Schuylers, Ketchum, etc., were placed, as fellow stockholders, the names of Gorman and Rosser, the governor and secretary of the territory, without their knowledge. The railroad charter became a political issue, and ordinary corporations, less rich than Croesus, stood aghast with amazement, like Egyptian enchanter of old, when seeing their own serpents devoured by a serpent larger than all the rest. This charter, by the legislature of Minnesota, passed March 4, 1854, was intended, by the corporators, to "*antici-*

<sup>1</sup> Council Journal, 1854, p. 301.



*pate*" the passage of two bills then pending in Congress, granting to Minnesota the largest donation ever made to any territory, viz., no less than 852,480 acres. To get this magnificent slice of the public domain as their own, and forever, was the purpose of the Minnesota & Northwestern, and the explanation of the "peculiar pressure" brought to bear upon the legislature. But, "in vain is the net spread in the eyes of any bird." Mr. Sibley, ever watchful of the rights of the people of the territory, and the rights of the United States, as well as jealous of Eastern capitalists, and of their designs upon the young territory,—and aided by Governor Gorman,—quietly effected a flank march, and secured, when the Minnesota land bill was passed in the house, in Congress, June 20, 1854, the addition of the following proviso, viz., "The lands so granted to said territory shall be subject to the disposal of any future legislature, for the purposes aforesaid, and for no other; nor shall they inure to the benefit of any company heretofore constituted or organized;"—thus placing the grant under the control of a future legislature of the territory or state, and expressly excluding all corporations heretofore, or already, chartered by the legislature.

It is both interesting and important to digress here but a moment. The indignation of the people of the territory was arrested for a short time by a scene the like of which occurs but once in the same generation, perhaps but once in a century. The completion of the Chicago & Rock Island railroad was made illustrious by a "grand railroad excursion," as a fitting memorial of the opening of the line. A thousand persons of eminent profession and high standing, from all parts of the United States, were invited to "boom" the Northwest, and making Chicago their rendezvous, excursion westward, along the new line, to Rock Island, where five large steamers—"as far excelling in splendor the barges of the luxurious *Cleopatra* as did those the birchen canoe of the Ojibwa"<sup>1</sup>—stood ready to bear them onward to the city named in honor of the "Great Apostle of the Gentiles." The rolling fumes from the smokestacks of the steamers that plowed the waters, breast abreast, combining and soaring high in the air, doubtless reminded more than one entranced imagination of the cloudy pillar that guided the children of Israel as they passed through the desert. St. Paul was reached June 8, 1854,—

<sup>1</sup> Words of Dr. Nell.

three weeks before the Minnesota land bill was passed by the house, in Congress,—the happy corporators, under the charter given by the legislature, blissfully ignorant of the whereabouts of Mr. Sibley, and the “proviso” to be added to the bill. All were hilarious. Among the Eastern *Magi*,—doctors, divines, and devotees of science,—who, guided by the “*Star of the North*,” came to see where young Minnesota lay, were ex-President Fillmore, George Bancroft, Drs. Gardiner Spring, Vermilye, and Bacon, Professors E. D. Robinson, and Henry B. Smith, with Professors Gibbs, Larned, Silliman, Parker, and others, from New York, Boston, Yale, Harvard, and various theological and academical institutions in different parts of the land; coruscant men on the scroll of fame. Minnehaha and St. Anthony’s falls “done up,” the happy explorers abutted in the hall of the house of representatives in the new capitol building, and discussed a magnificent supper where, but three months before, the enormous charter was born. Beneath the splendor of lights, eating, orating, and drinking (water), and next, in the chamber where Justice is said to hold her scales, amid music and dancing, the guests pursued their pleasure, till raven midnight bore them off to their steamers, ready to start and return.

The exhilaration was great. The following Sunday, June 13, 1854, the Rev. E. D. Neill, an active and eminent divine of St. Paul, carried away by the glow of the times, preached a sermon “On Railroads, and Other Modes of International Communication” from the words in Isaiah, 40:3, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness! Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God! Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord be revealed, and all flesh see it together.”<sup>1</sup> He enforced the great truth that, doubtless, the vision Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah, extended beyond the Holy Land, the Mediterranean, and Pillars of Hercules, and that, not only “the Chicago & Rock Island,” but “the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad,” as well, with its great charter, and its eye on the land bill, entered within the range of the prophet’s perspective. Curious enough, the great socialist, Robert Owen, about the same

<sup>1</sup> See Neill’s History of Minnesota for a full account, pp. 595–607. Fourth Edition.

time, seems to have caught up the current "opinion" that the millennium comes by gradual progress through human means, and, minus the Christianity, sent a document, dated November 4, 1854, to the legislature that made the great charter, entitled "*The Permanent Happy Existence of the Human Race, or the Commencement of the Millennium in 1855,*" a document inviting "all governments, religions, classes, sects, and parties, in all countries," to meet in St. Martin's Hall, London, Monday, January 1, 1855, and also to the "Great Trades Meeting of Universal Delegates," May 14, 1855, to introduce millennial glory "*without revolution, or violence, or injury to anyone,*" but "*with peace, order, wise foresight, and lasting benefit to all!*"<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to say that when the paper was read in the house of the legislative assembly, Mr. Sibley, having some doubts as to the railroad method of preparing the way of the Lord, moved that the document be laid upon the table, which office was lovingly done, and where, ever since, it has taken its rest in slumber secure and undisturbed.

To return from this digression. June 20, 1854, the house of representatives at Washington passed the Minnesota land bill, with the proviso alluded to. After the bill had gone to the senate, the discovery was made that, by some means or other, serious alterations had occurred. The text of the bill had been tampered with. In the effort to make straight a highway for God, the official records of Congress had been made crooked. The sanctity of the national legislation had been profaned in the march to millennial glory. The word "future" had been stricken out, and the word "or" displaced to make room for the word "and." And thus, the bill—now reading "heretofore constituted *and* organized"—went to the senate. By the sixteenth section of the bill the charter became void, unless, by July 1, 1854, the company was organized with a full board of directors. The alteration of "or" into "and" was made on the twenty-eighth. The senate passed the altered bill on the twenty-ninth. July 1st was at hand, and to organize prior to the passage of the bill was to lose all. To organize after that event, and before July 1st, was a "hot-haste" affair, a matter of one day's notice! And it was done, the perplexity still remaining that, even though *organized after* the bill was passed, yet they were *constituted*

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<sup>1</sup> See House Journal, Minnesota Territory, 1855, p. 134.

*before* it was passed! In this way, however, the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad sought to evade the proviso which subjected the lands to future legislation, and excluded all companies, whether "constituted or organized heretofore," from the benefit of the same. The company expected to hold the lands under the bill, as altered, pleading that, though constituted, yet they were not organized, prior to the passage of the bill. Thus they hoped to escape the excluding terms of the act their art had spoliated, and possess, in fee, for themselves, 852,480 acres of the public domain, with as much more as hereafter the liberality of Congress might grant to the Territory of Minnesota.

Fraud suspected, the house of representatives, July 24th, appointed a committee of five to investigate, and report to the house. The committee reported, and, amid great excitement, the original language of the bill was restored. This being regarded as insufficient, for rebuke, Congress, by joint resolution, August 4, 1854, formally "repealed" the whole grant, and "annulled" the charter.

The entire country was agitated over the disclosures made. As already stated, the Hon. Mr. Sibley was, at such a time, elected to the ensuing legislature of the territory, to resist the re-enactment of the charter by men in the legislature defying the National Congress. Enough were elected to make sure this desired result, had some not dishonored the pledges they had given to the people.

January 3, 1855, the Sixth Legislature met, and, in executive session, received the governor's annual message, expressing therein his strongest protest against the charter of the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad. "We look," said he, "with jealousy upon the encroachments of capital upon the rights and privileges of the people. In a new country, we will have to keep eternal vigilance, or this powerful adversary to the people's rights will lay hold of, and bind, the infant arms of this young territory, until it move the body at will. The *money king* of our country has already more than a just share of influence among all the affairs of men, and, like the great waters of the Mississippi, bears off on its tide every impediment to its progress, and sinks it to the bottom." In spite of a hand-to-hand struggle, Mr. Sibley, and a faithful few at his side, battling inch by inch against it, an act supplementary to amend the act incorporating the Minnesota &

Northwestern Railroad, was passed January 30, 1855, by a strictly two-thirds vote, to the disappointment and indignation of the people of the territory. Men, sent to the legislature and solemnly pledged to vote against the charter, betrayed their trust in the trying hour. The same influence that procured the fraud upon the records of Congress, procured the defection in the legislature. February 1, 1855, the governor "vetoed" the amended and re-enacted charter. February 12th, the day the veto was laid on the table, Governor Gorman wrote to the Hon. Mr. Cutting in Congress, commending what Congress had done, yet asking that Congress might save the land grant to the pioneers of Minnesota, who ought not to suffer for crimes of which others were guilty. February 14th, Mr. Sibley's motion to take from the table the bill, the veto, and the message, was defeated. February 15th, resolutions of defiance to Congress were introduced into the house, assailing *the proviso in the organic act of March 3, 1849*, whereby Congress reserved to itself the right to disapprove territorial legislation, and praying for the repeal of the same. February 16th, Mr Davis' motion to take up the bill, veto, and message, was again defeated, like Sibley's, by a two-thirds vote. Then, February 17, 1855, Saturday, 3 P. M., the amended and re-enacted charter was passed by the same two-thirds once more, and, the senate concurring, the offensive measure became a law, the pledges made to the people and the governor's objections to the contrary notwithstanding.

This day was memorable for the preparation and transmission to Congress of a document drawn by the Hon. Mr. Sibley in behalf of himself, the brave minority of one-third, and the people of Minnesota; a document the parallel to which for fearless and burning exposure of perfidy and wrong, is perhaps unknown in the annals of any territory or state. A Damascus blade, like the sword of Saladin, it cleaves, at a stroke, the adversary's head. It is the photograph of a man, who, in an adverse hour, when crime is victorious, and betrayal is prosperous, knows how both to speak and to act. It shows us a man supported by the consciousness of rectitude, the courage of conviction, the panoply of fact, the armor of right, in short all the moralities that go to make up a man unaccustomed to yield to numbers or to wrong, much less to treason and lies. Beyond all question, it is his own production. It has in it the tone and the tread of

a lash-bearing Ajax. Its "Whereases" and "Resolved" are the language of one whom money could not seduce, nor threats intimidate, nor bribery approach. It courts no smiles, fears no frowns, and shuns no responsibility. It speaks the truth, shames the devil, and dares contradiction. Reciting the baseness of those who had broken the trust confided to their care, it asks that crimes against the people's rights may not deprive them of the same, but that the congressional grant may yet be preserved to them, while the re-enacted charter may be annulled once more, and all connection of the corporators with the grant be forever terminated. The "memorial" is as follows, and speaks for itself.

MEMORIAL OF THE MINORITY OF MEMBERS OF THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE.

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*To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:*

The Memorial of the undersigned members of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Minnesota, respectfully represents: That

WHEREAS, At the last session of the Legislative Assembly, a charter was granted to certain corporators therein named, most of whom were non-residents of this Territory, under the name and style of "The Minnesota and North Western Railroad Company," which charter contained franchises and privileges of so unprecedented a character as to excite the indignation of the people, who repudiated its provisions by the election of members of the present Assembly, who were pledged against said Act of incorporation, and in favor of a memorial to your Honorable Body to disapprove and annul it;

*And Whereas*, Among those thus openly and publicly pledged, were the five members of the House from the Saint Paul District, three of whom have since, as your memorialists firmly believe, through the influence of corrupt means used by the said Company, or its agents, been induced to disregard the solemn obligations incurred by them previous to the election, and to cast their votes in favor of a re-enactment of the obnoxious charter, with amendments, thereby giving to the friends of said charter sufficient force to override the Executive veto, by a bare two-third majority;

*And Whereas*, By the two-third vote thus obtained, the House of Representatives of Minnesota has this day passed an Act supplementary to the Act amendatory of the charter of said Company, without giving it the usual routine of legislation, by suspending all rules, and passing it through to a third reading within fifteen minutes after its first introduction into that body, and without allowing it to be printed, thus giving to the opponents of said bill no opportunity of examining its provisions;

*And Whereas*, The whole course of the Company so incorporated has been characterized by fraud—by forgery, in the alteration of important



words in the Congressional Act granting land to Minnesota for railroad purposes—and by the use of base and demoralizing means to procure the re-enactment of a charter which your Honorable House of Representatives has previously, without a dissenting voice, disapproved and annulled.

*And Whereas*, For a further proof of the bad faith and evil designs of the aforesaid Company, your memorialists would respectfully refer your honorable body to the message of the President of the United States, with the accompanying documents from the Attorney General of the United States, laid before the House of Representatives at its present session, touching a certain suit commenced in the name of the United States, against the said Minnesota and North Western Railroad Company, with reference to which no comment is necessary on the part of your memorialists;

*And Whereas*, The majority of both houses of this Legislative Assembly have passed resolutions offensive in their terms to your honorable body, and defiant of its authority, not only without the assent or sanction of a majority of the citizens of this Territory, but, as your memorialists sincerely believe, in opposition to the wishes of a large majority thereof;

*And Whereas*, We regard the said incorporated Company as having brought upon Minnesota undeserved shame and disgrace by connecting her name with a fraudulent alteration of your records, for which neither she nor any considerable number of her citizens should be held responsible;

*And Whereas*, We are convinced that the sole object of said Company is to gain possession of the land granted by your honorable body for railroad purposes, by any means, however unscrupulous, and without any design to act in good faith towards the Territory or general government:—

*Therefore*, Your memorialists, comprising three out of nine members of the Council, and six out of eighteen members of the House, respectfully pray that your honorable body will, as soon as practicable, dissolve all connection between this Territory and the Minnesota North-Western Railroad Company, by disapproving and annulling the charter so re-enacted as above set forth, with all the amendments thereto; and that your honorable body will not hold Minnesota responsible for the refractory and disrespectful acts of a majority of its present Legislative Assembly, but will take such a course as will secure to the people thereof the benefit of the grant of land made by your honorable body to the Territory, by act of 29th June last, and repealed on the 4th August following.

S. B. OLMSTEAD, <i>Pres't</i> , L. VAN ETEN, NORMAN W. KITTSOON,	}	<i>Members of the Council.</i>
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J. S. NORRIS, <i>Speaker</i> , H. H. SIBLEY, F. ANDROS,	}	<i>Members of the House of Representatives.</i>	{	CHARLES S. CAVE, JAMES BEATTY, WILLIAM A. DAVIS.
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ST. PAUL, *February* 17, 1855.

This memorial, signed by the minority, reached Congress in time, and, with other influences at work, saved to Minnesota the land grant, and sundered all ties between it and the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad. The original language of the bill was restored, and the refusal of the senate,



August 27, 1855, to concur with the house, *secured the grant*. Whether Congress has the right to repeal a grant, or annul a territorial charter, became now a point of secondary importance. The company obtained from four distinguished lawyers, Hon. R. W. Walworth, G. C. Bronson, Wm. Curtis Noyes, and John M. Barbour, the "opinion," September 1, 1854, that a legislature can give a title, prospectively, to what it does not possess, that neither Congress nor the legislature can repeal a charter once granted, and that the company's title to the lands was good.<sup>1</sup> An inspection of the "opinion,"

<sup>1</sup> Opinion of Hon. R. H. Walworth, G. C. Bronson, Wm. Curtis Noyes, and J. M. Barbour, on the power of Congress to repeal, etc., etc. St. Paul, 1854.

[NOTE.—The four following questions were submitted to these gentlemen, to-wit.:

"*First* — Did the Territory of Minnesota, under, or by virtue of the first mentioned act of Congress, take any, and if so, what, right or interest in the lands granted by Congress to the said territory, or any right whatever?

"*Second* — Did the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad Company take any, and if so, what, rights or interests, under their act of incorporation, the first mentioned act of Congress, and the organization of the company?

"*Third* — Does the repealing act passed by Congress impair or in any way legally affect the rights and interests of the railroad company, and if so, to what extent?

"*Fourth* — Can the Territory of Minnesota, without the assent of the company, divest such company of, or impair, the franchises, rights, and privileges conferred upon it by the acts referred to, or which it has acquired, by virtue of the proceedings above mentioned?

"Very Respectfully Yours,

"ROBERT W. LOWBER,

"*Vice President M. & N. W. R. R. Co.*"

The several answers to these questions were in substance, as follows:

"*First* — Our answer to the first question, is that by the act of Congress referred to, the Territory of Minnesota became and was, the moment such act was passed, vested, *first*, with a *franchise* which empowered the territory to build its railroad upon the lands of the United States, and to operate the same; neither of which could have been done by the territory without the assent of the general government, and also of an *easement*, or right of way, in such lands for the purposes of a railroad; and *secondly*, an interest and property in the sections of land conditionally granted, which entitled the territory, upon constructing the road, or causing it to be constructed in sections, as contemplated by the act, to the fee of the land, without any further action on the part of Congress.

"*Second* — The rule of the common law that grants of property of which the title is not in the grantor when the grant is made, are void, is not applicable to this case; for here, the legislature of Minnesota, the supreme law-making power itself, by making such grant, and declaring that the same shall have full force, so as to vest the fee simple, absolutely, in the com-

pany, without any further act or deed, abrogates and annuls this rule of the common law, by the paramount power and authority of the statute. The government of the territory could make a valid contract by a legislative act to give land, subsequently to be acquired, to an individual, so as to give him a vested interest therein the moment the territory obtained its interest.

"The grant from the territory, therefore, was valid, and conveyed to the railroad company a beneficial interest in all the lands subsequently granted by Congress to such territory for the purposes of the road, which beneficial interest became vested in the company immediately upon the passage of the act of Congress and the organization of the company, without the necessity of any further act or deed (section 8), although the company may, if they shall desire to do so, require the governor to execute his deed by way of further assurance.

"*Third* — We think the subsequent repealing act passed by Congress does not affect the rights and interests of the territory, or of the railroad company, which had become vested under the act of Congress of the twenty-ninth of June, 1854.

"1. It is a principle of the common law that a grant of land or of a franchise, or other property, once made by a legislative body cannot be repealed by the granting power. The law upon this subject is thus laid down by Justice Story: 'Every grant of a franchise is necessarily exclusive, so far as the grant extends, and cannot be resumed nor interfered with. The legislature cannot recall its grant nor destroy it. In this respect, the grant of a franchise does not differ from a grant of lands. In each case, the particular franchise or particular land, is withdrawn from legislative operation. The subject matter has passed from the hands of the government.'

"2. The grant made by Congress to the Territory of Minnesota was, *first*, a grant of the right to construct the railroad on the lands of the United States, being a grant of a franchise as well as an easement in the lands themselves; and, *secondly*, a grant of the fee, although conditional of the particular sections of land designated in the act.

"*Fourth* — We are of the opinion that the legislature of Minnesota has no power to divest the railroad company of its rights, or in any way to impair the same.

"1. By the common law, as we have endeavored to show, the government cannot, of itself, resume or annul its grant, in whole or in part.

"2. The legislature of Minnesota possesses no powers except those which have been conferred upon it by the act creating it. Now, clearly, Congress could not confer any legislative power which it did not itself possess under the Constitution. Nor has it attempted to do so in this case, but, on the contrary, the sixth section of the act organizing the territory, declares that 'the legislative power shall extend to all rightful subjects of legislation, consistent with the Constitution of the United States, and the provisions of this act.' (9 Stat. at Large, 405.)

"REUBEN H. WALWORTH,  
"WM. CURTIS NOYES,  
"JOHN M. BARBOUR."

NEW YORK, September 1, 1854.]

however, shows that the company put into the hands of these legal gentlemen the altered text of the Minnesota land bill, not stating that the bill passed by the senate was not the bill passed by the house, and that, both before the fraud and after it, the company was *excluded, by the proviso*, from any interest in said lands. It may be true that the company was technically organized after the bill was passed, but it was none the less true that it was essentially constituted before that passage. Able lawyers in Congress held that, to argue, in this case, the distinction between the terms constituted and organized, was an empty plea. It may be true that a territorial statute can annul the rule of common law, and a grantor convey, or give in fee, what he does not own. All this was irrelevant. Mr. Sibley's position, viz., the right reserved to Congress by the organic act, March 3, 1849, establishing the territory, the right to disapprove and disaffirm territorial legislation, was impregnable and unassailable, so long as that organic act had not been decided unconstitutional. Nor could the right of Congress to protect its official record and its legislation from fraud be denied. It remains only to add here, that February 19, 1855, the same two-thirds of the legislature of Minnesota, as before, voted down a resolution, offered in the house, to investigate the charge "openly made in the streets, and almost universally accredited as true," that members of the legislature had been "bribed and corrupted."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the celebrated legislature of 1855, and such were Mr. Sibley's relations to it. Such, also, was his service to the people of the territory. Neither the cunning, nor art, employed in Congress or in the legislature availed to evade, or destroy, the proviso whose insertion in the Minnesota land bill his foresight secured before it was passed.

The years 1857-1858 evoked new scenes and events in which Mr. Sibley again appears as a presiding genius, standing firm amid storms, as before, bringing order from chaos and light out of darkness. The time had come for Minnesota to seek entrance into the sisterhood of states. The population was between 150,000 and 200,000. Great quantities of land had been settled upon; counties had multiplied; villages, towns, and cities had sprung up; schools had been planted, roads completed, business established, and printing presses increased. Immigration poured in like a spreading stream;

<sup>1</sup> House Journal, Monday, February 19, 1855.

rich harvests, though limited, rewarded the laborer's toil; commerce and trade advanced, and everything *seemed* to swim in a sea of unwonted and uninterrupted prosperity. It was the beginning of 1857, a year never to be forgotten, and but three years before the breaking out of our Civil War. February 23, 1857, Congress passed an "Enabling Act," authorizing the people of the territory to meet in convention, at St. Paul, and form for themselves a state constitution. March 5th it enacted another magnificent grant of land, 4,500,000 acres, to aid the territory in railway construction. May 22d a special session of the legislature passed over to the hands of four chartered but impecunious railroad companies, to-wit, (1) *the Minnesota & Pacific*, (2) *the Minneapolis & Cedar Valley*, (3) *the Transit*, (4) *the Southern Minnesota*, all the lands donated by Congress, and ordered an election to be held June 8th for the choice of delegates to a convention to form a state constitution, July 13th, at the capitol of the state. The delegates met in St. Paul, and the feeling ran high. The Democratic party had existed in the territory since 1850, the Republican since 1854. The war-cloud was gathering, Kansas was bleeding, churches and platforms were thundering. On the great slavery question of the hour, Choate was answering Sumner, and Rhett was replying to Douglas. The mightiest men of the nation were in action. In Minnesota the struggle was to see now, under what escort, and with what constitution, Minnesota should enter the Union. Republican speakers, imported from different states, stumped the territory everywhere. Each party suspected the other, each watched the other, each accused the other, and each, threatening the other, was resolved to secure for itself the organization of the constitutional convention. The "Enabling Act" being silent as to the *hour* the convention should assemble, the Republican delegates took possession of the hall of the house of representatives at 12 midnight of Sunday, ostensibly to "watch and pray for our Democratic brethren," but, really and truly, to "prevent the Democrats" from performing that same kind office for their "Republican brethren." The devotion was sleepless; eyes were sharp; ears were acute. Both parties were in caucus. An agreement was reached between 7 and 9 A. M., Monday, that the convention should not be organized till 12 noon of that day, viz., July 13, 1857. The Republicans still holding the hall, and the Democrats entering in a body, at seventeen

minutes before twelve o'clock, the secretary of the territory, and, at that time, acting governor of the territory, and a delegate also to the convention, the Hon. Mr. Chase, the officer to whom by law the certificates of election were sent, ascended the speaker's desk and called the convention to order. A motion, coming from some one of the delegates, was made "to adjourn till to-morrow at 12 noon." Immediately Mr. J. W. North took the platform and moved to organize the convention. The secretary of the territory put the motion first made to the convention, and declared it carried, whereupon the Democrats retired from the hall. The Republicans remaining in the hall, proceeded to business and organized for themselves, electing T. J. Galbraith, Esq., as chairman *pro tem.*, and afterward, Ste. A. D. Balcomb as their permanent president. The Democrats, finding, next day, their Republican friends organized and in possession of the hall, at 12 noon adjourned to the council chamber of the capitol, electing, "by acclamation," the Hon. H. H. Sibley as their temporary chairman, and afterward, also, as the president of their permanent organization. Each branch sat separate throughout the whole period of their labors, from July 13 to August 29, 1857. Each formed a state constitution. Each claimed to have a majority of legally elected delegates. Each styled itself "*The Constitutional Convention.*" The Republicans affirmed the right of anyone, bearing a certificate of election signed by the proper officer, to call the convention "to order," and "make a motion," apart from any canvass of the credentials themselves, as to whether they were spurious or genuine. The Democrats as strongly affirmed, not only the right, but the propriety, of the secretary of the territory, acting governor, and certified delegate as well, to do the same. The one, inconsistently enough, denied the territorial secretary's right to put a motion to adjourn, or even to call the convention to order. It was argued there was "no convention to be adjourned," because "no organization." Besides, it was "federal interference," which must be "resisted." The other denied the right of a delegate to "mount the rostrum," and, acting the double rôle of speaker in the chair, and member on the floor, himself make to himself a motion, while another was pending, then put it to the house, as if coming from the house. And so the parties stood, poles asunder.

It would seem, plainly, that the Republican organization was incompetent, and that over which Mr. Sibley presided was the only valid one. A *punctum saliens* must be found somewhere. A majority present, some one must rise to his feet. Accepting the Republican principle that the mere possession of a certificate, apart from all canvass of credentials, is *prima facie* evidence of legal election and title to a seat in convention, it is clear that some one must call to order, and some one must move either to adjourn till others arrive, or to elect a temporary chairman. That all motions are unparliamentary, unless after prior organization, is a self-evident absurdity, making organization itself impossible. The *prima facie* right to call to order, or make a motion of any kind, is grounded alone in the possession of a certificate of election, and is inherent in the delegates themselves. It is antecedent to all constitutions and all conventions. The right to move to elect a chairman involves the right to move to adjourn, for a motion to adjourn takes precedence of all other motions. Where co-existing motions are made, the one made first, or the one made farthest from the chair, is entitled to prior recognition and precedent action. Nor will a motion be allowed to be entertained during the pendency of another, properly made, and in possession of the house. Least of all will a speaker or chairman be allowed to make his own motion and then put it to the house. Such action is indecorous, out of order, revolutionary, and unparliamentary. Parliamentary rules are a system of logic, implying always their postulates and necessary presuppositions. Party spirit may blind men's minds to their true understanding, and preconcert and program falsely construe them, but there is a "boomerang ethics" in their breast that reacts and avenges their outrage, and makes *felo de se* of every attempt to insult them or set them aside. The sequel shows this. Nor could the Republicans fail to have known what was legal in the case. The scenes at the national capitol, where members elect had met, adjourned, re-met, and adjourned again, and failed, for ten, thirty, and forty days, to choose a Republican speaker of the house, till the senate grew weary, and went on to business alone, were too familiar to allow, for one moment, the position of the Democrats to be seriously questioned. To the Democrats belonged the constitutional organization, and over this assembly Mr. Sibley presided. Had even two-thirds of the delegates



remained after the adjournment to 12 noon next day was carried,—no one calling “Division” and no one demanding a “count,”—their organization had nevertheless been null and void.

A full and interesting account of the proceedings of each convention is published in two separate volumes, one for the Democrats,<sup>1</sup> one for the Republicans.<sup>2</sup> From both it appears that, weeks elapsing, and better counsels prevailing, a “Committee of Conference and Compromise” was appointed from both to meet and devise some method whereby, instead of two separate constitutions, one constitution might be agreed upon and submitted to the people, in the hope of securing its ratification, its approval by Congress, and the speedy admission of Minnesota as a state into the Federal Union. The proposal for a conference came from the Republican side, and was met from the Democratic side in a conciliatory spirit. The Committee of Conference successfully completed their labors, and the same constitution adopted in duplicate, and signed and attested separately, by the president and secretary of each convention, and subscribed by the delegates of each, as “*Done in convention, this twenty-ninth day of August, 1857, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-second year; In witness whereof, etc., etc.,*” was submitted to the people of the territory, and by the same unanimously ratified, October 13, 1857.

A careful comparison of the two constitutions, framed by the separate branches of the convention, establishes the fact that the one constitution of the State of Minnesota, which is the adopted report of the Committee of Conference, ratified by the people, and sanctioned by Congress, is, with a few exceptions, the substantial instrument formulated by the Democratic branch of the delegates to the convention. This organic foundation was borne, in due time, by the senators elect, to the Congress of the United States. January 29, 1858, Mr. Douglas introduced a bill into the senate for the admission of Minnesota as a state upon the basis of this adopted and ratified document. After much debate and unjustifiable delay, it passed the senate April 7, 1858, three votes dissenting, and shortly after, by a vote of 158 to 38, the house concurred with the senate. The president, May 11, 1858, approved the act,

1 The Debates and Proceedings of the Minnesota Constitutional Convention, 1857, p. 685.

2 Debates and Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention for the Territory of Minnesota, 1858, p. 619.



and thus, nine years after her organization as a territory, Minnesota stood on her feet as one of the equal sisters of the thirty-one independent states of the great American Union. Her escort into the Union was both political parties, her banner the formal production of both, but the essential production of one. Another star shone refulgent in the deep blue of the national flag. It is one of the pleasing and undesigned coincidences, worth notice in history, that the day when the Republicans proposed the Committee of Conference to "unite on a single constitution" was the day, August 8, 1857, when they adopted, as a motto for the seal of the state, the words "*Liberty and Union!*" and the hour, 12 noon of day, and not 12 noon of night, when they captured the hall "to watch and pray for our Democratic brethren!"

While the admission of Minnesota into the Union was an occasion of great joy and congratulation, the delay attending the same was a just ground of complaint. The enabling act pledged to the territory a speedy admission upon compliance with the conditions specified, all of which the territory had promptly fulfilled. Notwithstanding this, Minnesota was kept waiting for months at the door of Congress, without one valid reason to support the delay, the foot-ball of partisans and demagogues of the time. Her state officers had all been elected, her state legislature convened, and yet, through default of Congress, her public and private credit was injuriously affected, immigration checked, and her whole government paralyzed. The executive officers could not qualify, the government elect could not act, the legislature could make no laws. Nothing could be done until after her admission into the Union. Such unmerited repulsion aroused the ire of the people, and the legislature, May 1, 1858, amended the constitution, empowering the officers to qualify at once, without further obeisance to Congress. It raised serious questions. How long may Congress allow politicians to tamper with the just claims of territories and trifle with the pledges of the national government? By what right may Congress exercise government, one hour, in a territory which, having promptly complied with every requirement imposed by Congress, and asked for admission, is yet kept, to her injury, in the attitude of a mendicant, for months at the door of the capitol, without shadow of justification for such treatment? It was but natural and necessary that the governor elect, in his first annual message,

should advert to an injustice so great, and mete out to its perpetrators a deserved rebuke. "For the first time," said Governor Sibley, "in our political history, a state, against whose admission not a single valid objection could be urged, has been kept out of the Union for many months; not because of any fault of her own, but simply because it subserved the purposes of congressional politicians to allow her to remain suspended, for an indefinite period, like the fabled coffin of the False Prophet, between the heaven and the earth."<sup>1</sup> In fitting terms, the rod of rebuke is applied, not only to such men as, for party reasons, would exclude Minnesota "till the Kansas question is settled," but who, like John Sherman of Ohio, falsely accused the governor elect, by name, with a share in election frauds, the ground of the slander being no other than the unscrupulous lies of partisan prints. "I owe it," said the governor, "no less to the character of the state than to my own personal honor, to denounce it as basely calumnious and without shadow of foundation. I invite the strictest judicial investigation, for, if not legally elected governor, I would scorn to fill that station for a single hour."<sup>2</sup> The investigation was wholly unnecessary. The baseness of Sherman's libel upon Mr. Sibley and the senators elect from Minnesota, "o'erleaped itself and fell on t'other side." The senators were allowed to take their seats, notwithstanding the opposition of some extreme Southern men, and ten days after the legislature resolved to qualify the executive officers, Congress or no Congress, Minnesota was admitted to the Union.

None familiar with the history of the territory could have doubted for a moment, upon whom, first of all, the title "His Excellency, the Governor of the State of Minnesota" would fall. The election for state officers, held October 13, 1857, when the constitution was ratified, revealed the fact that the Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley was the popular choice. The contest between himself and the Hon. Alexander Ramsey, ex-governor of the territory, a gentleman of high standing and influence, was close and sharp, but the victory clear and conclusive: The ballot had lifted Mr. Sibley to the eminent position of the first chief executive officer of the new-born State of Minnesota, the *first Democratic governor, and the only Democratic governor the state has ever possessed.*

<sup>1</sup> Senate Journal, 1858, p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 374.

The epoch when Mr. Sibley came into power as the governor of Minnesota, the year 1857, was a memorable one, and is chronicled as a year of the greatest financial disaster ever known to the nation. The penalty for reckless extravagance and daring adventure was now to be paid. The rapid development of the country, the promise of boundless expansion and wealth, the influx of foreign immigration, the unbridled career of speculation, the illegitimate extension of business, the enormous inflation of the banking system by paper money, and vast railroad enterprises, produced a crisis of unprecedented pressure, a foretaste of that "shaking of heaven, earth, sea, dry land," and "the nations," portending universal dissolution. It was a righteous Nemesis. The entire fabric of commerce and trade was shattered to its foundation. Public credit was wrecked. The grandest fortunes perished in a moment. Men living in luxury were impoverished for life, and the sale of palatial homes atoned for their folly. A sense of insecurity sat brooding everywhere. The bourses of Europe and exchanges of America alike felt the shock. The fall was perpendicular and the crash was complete. Grand enterprises ambitiously begun were suddenly arrested and ignominiously abandoned. Men "began to build, but were not able to finish." The great commercial cities of the world suffered the extremest distress, and civil revolutions only added to the general horror,—a presage of our own Civil War in 1861. Minnesota formed no exception to the general distress. She had "sprung almost as suddenly as the armed Minerva from the brain of Jove." From a population of 5,000 in 1848 she had leaped to one of over 150,000 in 1857, destined to reach nearly 600,000 at the close of the decade next following. The rage for wealth was an unrestrainable madness, a competition of whirling insanity which, like a cyclone, bore away all on its breast, to scatter them everywhere to the winds. Utopias dazzled in the sky, and El Dorados floated before every imagination. The story of the birth of towns outstripped the wonders of the Arabian Nights' entertainments. In the graphic words of Judge Flaudrau, "Towns on paper were thicker than locusts in Egypt. There was little else than towns. Agriculture was hardly known. Even hay was imported while millions of tons lay uncut in the Minnesota bottoms. The current rate of interest was *three and five per cent per month*. Everybody borrowed all he could to operate with in town lots. Property reached

higher prices in 1856 than it has reached at any time since. Everyone felt rich. None thought of the fact that we had not a single thing to sell, but all to buy. Then came a succession of failures all over the country. Foreclosures followed as fast as demands fell due. Never was smash more complete. There was not money enough in the country to do the ordinary commerce of life."<sup>1</sup>

The lesson, however, was salutary. It instructed men that all wealth comes back to the soil, that honest labor is the only substantial foundation of all prosperity, and honest gains the only possessions that abide. It taught them that even governments and banks, insurance and railroad companies, corporations, syndicates, bourses, and business firms, of whatever description, are powerless to successfully confront that moral order of the universe, or law of righteousness, to which finance itself must be subject. It whispered to many a conscience, stained by the "*auri sacra fames*," and stung by a sense of self-degradation, that "he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent," and that "as a partridge sitteth on eggs not her own, and hatcheth them not, so is he that getteth riches, yet not by right. In the midst of his days they shall leave him, and in the end of his days he shall be a fool." "Thou fool! this night thy soul!" rang in the chambers of many an awakened heart, and deep sank the conviction, that Agur's prayer, "*Give me neither poverty nor riches*," was a better investment than Iago's advice, "*Go to, put money in thy purse; Go to!*"

To borrow capital at such a time, for railroad purposes, and pledge the credit of the infant State of Minnesota for the payment of the principal and interest of the bonds executed in her name, was the gigantic blunder of the hour. Much as may be said to palliate the impetuous and adventurous order of a people to whom the stage coach, the ox cart, and the Conestoga wagon, were the only means of public transportation, in a territory so vast, and so rapidly filling, yet the financial crisis being such as it was, the enterprise could only merit the name of "Minnesota's Folly." A tyro in political economy might have seen it, and Governor Sibley opposed it. The celebrated "*Five Million Loan*" will ever stand in the annals of the state as the loftiest monument of the unreason of the people. It will be remembered that Congress, March

<sup>1</sup> Address to the Pioneer Association by Hon. C. E. Flandrau, May 11, 1886, pp. 16, 17.

5, 1857, had granted 4,500,000 acres of land to the Territory of Minnesota, to aid in railway construction, which the legislature at its special session that year, May 22, 1857, passed over into the hands of four chartered railroad companies who had neither the money nor credit to carry on the projected improvements. This was the first step in the management of the great trust for the benefit of the state. And the second step was of equal folly. Article 9, section 10, of the State Constitution, which 40,000 votes had ratified, provided that "*The credit of the state shall never be given, or loaned, in aid of any individual, association, or corporation.*" The legislature, however, impelled by supposed necessity, under the stringency of the times, and a desire for development of the resources of the state, drank of the Circean cup, and, listening to the song of the railroad sirens, passed another act, April 15, 1858, submitting to the people an amendment to the constitution (article 9, section 10), providing for the loan of the credit of the state to the four railroad companies, to the amount of no less than \$5,000,000, the condition being a certain amount of work done on the projected roads. The plan was to issue state bonds to the companies, bearing the official signature of Governor Sibley, and the broad seal of the state, bonds of \$100,000, at the rate of \$10,000 per mile for grading, said bonds to be delivered upon proof satisfactory to the governor that ten miles of road had been thoroughly completed and was ready for its superstructure, the principal and interest on these bonds to be secured by first mortgages of the companies to the state. Such the amendment. It passed the senate by a vote of yeas 27, nays 7, and the house by a vote of yeas 47, nays 24, not a few Democratic members being opposed to the measure. The people, however, ratified it, overwhelmingly, April 15, 1858, by a vote of 25,023 in favor, to 6,733 against, the vote of St. Paul being 4,051 for, to 183 against, the amendment. It was no party measure, in any sense whatever, but wholly free from politics, Republicans not less than Democrats sharing the responsibility. It was no administration scheme. In the words of Judge Flandrau, "*It went like a whirlwind,*" Mr. Sibley voting with the minority. The amendment thus passed became the organic law of the state, the credit of the state was loaned, and the public faith and honor of the state hereby became pledged for the payment of the principal and inter-

est. The companies accepted the offer, and, commencing their work, the several lines of the projected roads "resounded with the blows of the pick and the shovel, in active and laborious hands."

In ancient times there were certain high officials, called augurs, whose business it was to bore into things, inspect entrails, and, observing the sky, when danger was near and the cloud impending, watch just where the thunder would burst and the lightning would strike. Qualified, eminently, for a service so important, were Governor Sibley, Hon. R. W. Marshall, D. A. Robertson, C. H. Berry, C. E. Flandrau, and others, who, examining critically the true inwardness and ambiguity of the loan amendment, foreboded evil to the state, and counseled the utmost caution in the interpretation of the act, and the utmost care in the protection of the credit of the state.

June 3, 1858, was a *dies notabilis* in the history of Minnesota, the day of the first message of the governor of the state to the First State Legislature, convened December 2, 1857. Informed by special committee that both houses were assembled in joint convention, waiting his Excellency's presence, or any communication from his hand, Governor Sibley appeared in person and—introduced to the assembly—proceeded to deliver his inaugural. His first utterance was "*Our expression of gratitude to Almighty God that we have been preserved, in our transition state from a territorial to a state government, from the anarchy which has afflicted the people of a sister territory, under like circumstances.*"<sup>1</sup> After referring to the delay of Minnesota's admission, the wisdom of economy in government, the severity of the financial crisis, the importance of adequate banking laws, the condition of the railroads, the claims of the common schools, the need of organizing the militia force of the state, and the magnificent future for Minnesota guided by a virtuous, intelligent, educated, and religious people, he took up the question of the state bonds. Reminding the legislature that the public faith of the state was possibly endangered, and her credit loaned out to various chartered companies, he gave no uncertain sound as to what was his purpose in the case. "As guardian of the interests of the state," said he, "I shall, during my official term, without

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Journal, 1858, p. 372. The allusion was to the sanguinary scenes enacted in Kansas.



being unreasonably strict with these railroad associations, require to be satisfied, by unquestionable evidence, that they *have complied, as well with the spirit as with the letter of the amendment authorizing the loan*, and that they are conducting their operations, as parties to the contract with the people of the state, *in good faith, before I will consent to deliver over to them any portion of her bonds.*"<sup>1</sup>

August 21, 1858, before the issuance of any of the bonds, the governor also caused to be entered on the executive journal, and to be served upon each of the four railroad companies, notice that no bonds would be delivered unless upon previous condition that the companies each make, first of all to the state, "*a deposit of first mortgage bonds, based on a deed of trust to the state, equal in amount to the state bonds issued to such company, which shall specify a priority of lien to such bonds as the company may deliver to the state in exchange for her own bonds.*" The effect of this was clearly to secure the state by *exclusive prior lien* on the property of the companies, preventing the issuance of other like bonds to other parties. Solicited by agents of the companies to change his construction of the amendment, on the ground that his ruling embarrassed the companies, by limiting their "first mortgage bonds" to the state alone, he still declined and refused to deliver the bonds. November 5, 1858, he alleged, in response to the request of the companies, (1) "that the security of the state against a contingent neglect or inability of the companies to meet their obligations demanded such a construction," (2) "that the public faith and honor of the state were pledged for the payment of the bonds," (3) "that, otherwise, it would be in the power of the companies to issue an unlimited amount of first mortgage bonds which would, equally with those made to the state, be a lien on the property and franchises of the companies, and detract greatly from the value of the securities held by the state," and (4) "that the legislature that passed, and the people who ratified, the loan amendment, *intended that the credit of the state should not suffer in consequence thereof.*"<sup>2</sup>

Three of the companies, disposed to yield to the strong arguments of the governor, were prevented by the action of

<sup>1</sup> Senate Journal, Message, 1858, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Speech of ex-Governor Sibley in the Legislature, February 8, 1871.



the Minnesota & Pacific, which, having tendered to the governor, as a test, a trust deed not in conformity with his requirements, demanded the issuance of the bonds. Upon the governor's refusal to deliver the bonds, the company appealed to the supreme court for a peremptory writ to compel their issuance on the basis of the trust deed the governor had refused to accept. Two of the court granted the mandamus, Judge Flandrau dissenting. The governor, disposed at first to regard the decision as an encroachment of the judicial upon the executive prerogative, yielded, however, to the advice of the attorney general, who urged that, even should the order be disregarded by the governor, the companies might submit to his ruling and obtain the bonds, then appeal to the court to be released from his construction. Moreover, the appearance of the state in court by the presence of the attorney general, was a voluntary waiver, and would estop the governor's objection. To this the governor assented, adding that the supreme court was the highest judicial tribunal of the state, and entitled to decide the meaning of a legislative act. "I yielded," said he, "to the force of the attorney general's reasoning, because I was especially anxious to avoid the scandal of a conflict between the executive and judicial departments of the government in our infant state, and *the bonds were accordingly issued as prescribed by the mandate of the court.*"<sup>1</sup> This was November 12, 1858. The bonds were not issued, however, until the governor had satisfied himself, upon the certificate and oath of the state engineers, acting under his special instructions, that the grading of the roads was durable, the work done satisfactorily to the most critical test, and all the conditions imposed most faithfully met. "Not a bond was issued," said the public press, "except upon compliance with every condition, and the strictest interpretation of every condition, required by law. And in this Governor Sibley has shown that, in his capacity as chief executive, he has guarded the interests of the state by exacting a rigorous conformity with the provisions of the law, in favor of the state."<sup>2</sup>

The dissenting opinion of Judge Flandrau, given thirty years ago, and supporting the construction of the law by Governor Sibley, is an opinion of remarkable clearness, pre-

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<sup>1</sup> Speech of ex-Governor Sibley in the Legislature.—St. Paul Daily News, February 8, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul Daily News, February 9, 1871.

cision, and soundness, and betrays a capacity of legal perception and judgment, rare, indeed, at so early a stage of legal career. As the minority of the bench, he held that the words "*first mortgage bonds*" were ambiguous in the clause wherein they occurred; that the grant being a public one and the state a trustee for the people, no alienation should be presumed beyond what was expressed; that the value of the securities the state was to receive could not be depreciated even by implication, and that the ambiguous terms must be construed most favorably to the state, and consequently the trust deeds should "*specify a priority of lien in favor of the state.*" This would seem to be invincible. He supported this view by the fact that the loan of the state credit was to receive "*as securities*" for the same, first of all, two separate instruments, one pledging the net profits of the roads for the payment of interest on the bonds, the other conveying to the state the first two hundred and forty sections of unincumbered land. And now, and furthermore, "*as further security,*" in case of default, an amount of "*first mortgage bonds*" on the property and franchises of the companies equal to the amount issued by the state. It was a contract for the sole purpose of protecting the credit, good name, and honor of the state. In such connection and under such circumstances, the words "*first mortgage bonds*" could only mean an "*exclusive lien*" to the extent of the value named, "*not merely a lien to be shared equally by holders of similar bonds to the amount of \$23,000,000, which the Minnesota & Pacific Railroad Company alone proposed to issue.*" Otherwise the security was no security. The design of exacting the "*first mortgage bonds*" was clear. In the words, again, of Judge Flandrau, it was "*that, in case the companies defaulted, either as to principal or interest whose security was pledged by the two instruments named, no further bonds should be issued, but that the governor should proceed to sell the bonds of the defaulting companies, the bonds held in trust, or require a foreclosure of the mortgage executed to secure the same.*" Governor Sibley's construction, therefore, was correct, and was no other than that of the people of Minnesota, who adopted the amendment, April 15, 1858, viz., that the credit of the state should only be loaned to the railroad companies upon the condition of an absolutely valid security which could be no less than an "*exclusive first lien,*" as an ample protection against default. Had the minority of the

supreme court been its majority, the history of the State of Minnesota had been different, in some respects, from what its chronicle shows.<sup>1</sup>

The whole railroad enterprise and state bond arrangement was a disastrous failure. The companies defaulted. The credit of the state collapsed. The good faith of the state was compromised. The honor of the state was tarnished. The people of the state were disgraced. Facts vindicated, triumphantly, the wisdom of the governor's judgment in opposing the loan amendment, the supreme court's error in its writ of mandamus ordering the issue of the bonds without requiring priority of lien, and the soundness of Judge Flandrau's opinion. Such was the condition of affairs that even after the issue of \$2,000,000 of bonds, not one iron rail had been laid, and after the issue of \$2,275,000 of bonds only two hundred and fifty miles of grading had been done on all the roads. Even after the amendment had so overwhelmingly passed, the mandamus been granted, and the bonds issued, the Republican press exerted itself to baffle the whole enterprise, exciting suspicion everywhere against the bonds and defeating every effort made by Governor Sibley and others to negotiate the same in the city of New York, or place them elsewhere, until the credit of the state was wrecked, and the bonds made worthless for the purpose for which they were issued.<sup>2</sup> The companies ceased operations. December 1, 1859, Governor Sibley resolved to issue no more bonds, but required the trustees of the defaulting companies to foreclose and deliver their property and franchises to the state.

December 8, 1859, the governor delivered his last annual message, in person again, to the state legislature. In the course of his remarks, he adverted to the condition of the railway companies, the number of bonds issued, and the work done. He then dwelt, in eloquent manner, upon the solemn obligation of the state, notwithstanding her folly, to redeem the bonds of the state, issued, as they had been, by the sanction of the Constitution, the will of the people, and the peremptory order of the highest tribunal of the state. If it is necessary to part with a portion of the state domain, to keep the honor of the state, part with it. If necessary to convert the bonds, convert them. His words are the words of an in-

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<sup>1</sup> For Judge Flandrau's Opinion, See Minnesota St. Rep., Gilfillan, Vol. IV, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> See ex-Governor Sibley's Speech, St. Paul Daily News, February 9, 1871.

corruptible statesman alive to a sense of unblemished integrity, and ready for any sacrifice rather than face the shame of threatened *repudiation*. "I trust," said he, "that you will decide this grave and important question in such manner as to demonstrate abroad that the representatives of the people of Minnesota will not tolerate repudiation. *Better far, we were visited by pestilence or famine, for these are but instruments of God for which we were not responsible, but our own act in violation of public faith and pledged honor of the state would sink Minnesota, for all time to come, beneath the contempt and indignation of the civilized world.*"<sup>1</sup>

The relation of Governor Sibley to the Minnesota state bonds, during his administration, was a relation in every way most honorable to himself, both personally and officially. A regret was once expressed by the governor, and shared in by his friends, that he had not resisted the decision of the supreme court, and refused to obey its writ. This was but natural under the circumstances. He was under no compulsion to conform his executive action to the order of the court, which was only a co-ordinate, not superior, branch of the state government, powerless to enforce its mandate on the chief executive, who was independent of its jurisdiction. Nor, had he seen fit to disrespect the writ, could the supreme court have availed itself of the fact that, as yet, the independence of the executive had not been judicially declared. The Constitution is above the court, and guarantees this independence. Notwithstanding this, his character shines all the more brightly in this, that preferring to avoid the scandal of an open conflict between the two co-ordinate branches of government, bringing damage to the credit of the state, in a crisis so important, he waived a legal technicality, anxious only that both branches of the government might stand shoulder to shoulder, and effect the best possible result in the matter of a loan so enormous to the infant state as that of \$5,000,000. All that remained for the governor to do was to exact, rigorously, every requirement of the law, protect to the utmost the credit of the state, and so afford the railroad companies the least possible opportunity to default. If blame rests anywhere, it would seem to rest upon the supreme court in entertaining a case over which it had no jurisdiction by the Constitution. Resistance to the mandate would have been ill advised under the circumstances. The

<sup>1</sup> Senate Journal, 1859-1860, p. 15.

scandal would have arrested the progress of the state. Had the supreme court said to the companies, what it subsequently said to Selah Chamberlain when applying to compel the governor to issue \$25,000 of railroad bonds to him, under the loan amendment, viz., "*This court will not undertake to compel the governor of the state to the performance of any duty devolving on him as the chief executive, and pertaining to his office,*"<sup>1</sup> all had been well. It seems a clear misjudgment to regard the waiver of the governor, who thereby sought only the peace and prosperity of the state, as a ground for exercising jurisdiction where none existed, and rendering an interpretation adverse to that of the chief executive, in a matter of such vital moment.

To say, as often as has been said, in times of party excitement, that the state bonds, debt, and dishonor, were "created by the governor," or by "a Democratic administration," or by the "Democratic party," is to falsify history, and attribute to one class of citizens a responsibility created and accepted by all. The intention of the people of the state was good. The courage of the governor was as grand as his motives were praiseworthy, and his conduct unassailable. Now that the supreme court had granted the mandamus, and the executive had issued the bonds to the companies, it was the duty of every good citizen, and especially of those who so overwhelmingly had adopted the loan amendment, to exert themselves, to the utmost, to maintain the public credit of the state. The political parties were almost equally divided, Governor Sibley's majority over that of the Hon. Mr. Ramsey, the opposing candidate, at the time of election, being but small. Republicans not less than Democrats were bound to promote the success of the enterprise they had in common inaugurated. On the contrary, the fact remains, so far as a party question is concerned, that, notwithstanding the adoption of the amendment, the mandamus, and the issuance of the bonds, the Republican press and influential men of the party made persistent warfare on the bonds, injuring the name of the state, threatening repudiation, warning capitalists everywhere against them, hindering negotiation, and completely thwarting the effort of Governor Sibley to place them in New York, which, but for this adverse influence, had been successful. It is undeniable that, in the heat of party passion, during those memo-

1 See 4 Minnesota St. Rep., Gilfillan, Vol. IV, p. 229.

nable years of 1859-1860, when the nation was entering upon the throes of civil war, and the "negro question" was in the ascendant, the "Republican repudiators" of that time, as well as others, took advantage of that occasion to excite distrust everywhere, openly assail the bonds as "fraudulent," represent them thus to the incoming immigration unfamiliar with the facts, and so "gained control of the power of the state as against the Democratic party then upholding the integrity and honor of Minnesota."<sup>1</sup> Of this Governor Sibley had certainly the right to complain, as he did later on, of Governor Austin's message to the legislature, in 1871, describing the bonds as of "questionable validity." Political prepossession is not always regardful of accuracy, and it is but right that the people of the state should know, for all coming time, that the celebrated "Five Million Loan" was no party measure, and that if an "offensive odor attaches to the reminiscence of it," the strength of that perfume was supplied by the party opposed to the administration then in power, a party, to whom, most of all, the unamended Constitution of the state was indebted for its passage.

It will be a mistake, however, of grave character, should anyone think that railroad and state bonds were the only interests that commanded the consideration of the people, the legislature, and the chief executive, during Governor Sibley's administration. The vindication of the majesty of the law against mob violence, as in the case of what is known as the "Wright County War," illustrates the firmness of the governor's determination to resist anarchy and defend the rights of justice at whatever cost to the state. The organization of the militia force for the defense of the state, and the revision of the military laws; the proclamation to all officers of the law to arrest and prosecute Indians of whatever bands, guilty of murders and depredations; the recommendation of better statutes for the pursuit and capture of fugitives from justice, of larger encouragement to immigration, of reducing the election districts in order to diminish the representation in the legislature; frequent signing of bills that met his approval, and vetoes of bills that did not commend themselves to his judgment, and none of which were passed over his head; the importance of attention to the question of normal schools, and the opening

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<sup>1</sup> General Sibley's Speech in the Legislature of 1871.—St. Paul Daily Press, February 9, 1871; St. Anthony Democrat, February 15, 1871.



of the university as soon as possible; the condition of agriculture and commerce; in short, recommendations and special messages, in large number, concerning all the affairs of state, with a vast routine business imposed by the wants and needs of a state just born,—all this engaged his ceaseless and untiring attention.

Such was Governor Sibley's administration; a period of public service which expired January 1, 1860. None more eminent, worthy, honored, or respected, ever sat in a gubernatorial chair. Impartial in his appointments, free from partisan passion, conscientious and faithful in the discharge of his duties, independent, fearless, and free from corruption, anxious for the honor and credit of the state whose first chair he adorned, upright and just in his ways, commanding, yet kind and courteous to all, and amenable to the approach of the humblest citizen within the commonwealth, he presented himself a model for all his successors. So long as the history of Minnesota remains, checkered as it is, so long the example of her first governor will abide untarnished, a memorial of honor to the state, and a monument of praise to his name.

The three years next following the close of Governor Sibley's administration were eventful, beyond all anticipation, in the history of the human race, whether we consider the nations of the Old World, or regard only the United States. To omit notice of this fact, in any sketch of the times of ex-Governor Sibley, is an offense, unpardonable, against the claims of history. The year 1860 was a year remarkable in the history of the civilized world. Unusual events were pulsating everywhere, affecting the destinies of empires and of dynasties. Among the signs of the times were Russia emancipating 50,000,000 serfs; Kossuth struggling for the freedom of Hungary; Austria, in atonement for Magenta and Solferino, giving parliamentary government to the people; Garibaldi fighting for the liberation of Italy, from the Alps to the Adriatic; Sardinia breaking away from Rome, and absorbing one Italian state after another; Pio Nono issuing his encyclical; Germany marching to representative unity; Spain ejecting her queen and giving the ballot to the people; France, the tumultuating cradle of continental liberty, struggling, once more, to regain for herself the boon she had offered to others; in short, 180,000,000 of Europeans, lifting themselves up from degrading vassalage to the rank of self-governing and enlightened freemen.



The same spirit of progress in civilization was throbbing throughout the United States, save where the shackles still clanked on the limbs of the negro, and chained even the white man to an institution his better nature abhorred. Open revolt was proclaimed against the system of American slavery, "Constitution or no Constitution." The compromise measures, the fugitive slave law, the Dred Scott decision, the doctrine of President Buchanan and the extreme men of the South, that slavery is national, entitled to go wherever the flag floats, by constitutional right, and the Southern threat of secession, all had aroused the North to the deep consciousness that only the arbitrament of war could cut the knot of a national problem which all argument had failed to solve. Civil revolution was already in the air. South Carolina was preparing to fire on Fort Sumter, and "John Brown's soul" was "marching on" to Harper's Ferry! It was a year of portents everywhere, with omens as well in the heavens as on earth. Donati's comet of 1858 was followed by Encke's of 1860, and "the hairy monsters of the upper sky," brilliant, yet shaking pestilence, war, and famine, from their "horrid locks," reminded men of Halley's comet of 1456, which lighted the Turks to the capture of Constantinople and invasion of Europe, and sent all Christendom to its knees with "*Ave Marie*" on its lips, ending in the prayer, "*From the Devil, the Turk, and the Comet, Good Lord, deliver us!*"

We, of to-day, look back to that time with emotions of mingled amazement and awe. The civilization of the nineteenth century was changing front, millions not knowing the fact, and accounting for things by second and proximate causes which were only the occasions, and not the ultimate or first cause, of the mighty changes occurring. From equator to pole, and moving under the path of the sun, and trembling with the magnetic currents of the globe, the minds of men were agitated with deepest emotion. Chains were breaking. The genius of Liberty was walking abroad, and, with the touch of Ithuriel's spear, testing all the establishments of earth, wounding to death the various forms of despotic power, gray superstition, and institutional wrong, which, for centuries, had imposed on the world, under the names of religion, government, order and law, loyalty, love, and good will to men! The lying pretense was unmasked. In the United States, with a policy far more liberal and comprehensive than the

boasted constitutions of Greece or Rome, the counter fact of slavery still confronted the profession of freedom that streamed from the "Stars and Stripes," a contradiction the people were bound to wipe out. The spirit of Liberty, rising in beauteous form, wearing her spangled cap, and waving her flag to the nations, threw off the fetters by which men sought to bind her, redeemed to herself the rights of her early days, and extended a smile of promise and hope to the poor African, long the degraded victim of avarice and lust. "*Man as Man*" became an object of respect. Tenets were transferred from theory to practice. The lofty sentiments it was dangerous to utter in presence of organized power received a free ventilation, and systems of government, analyzed to their first principles, and pursued to their legitimate consequences, were the staple of debate in every mouth. That "*rara temporum felicitas*" of which Tacitus speaks,—when men could think as they pleased, and say what they thought,—began to reappear.

This mighty movement of the century culminated in the sixth decade of the century. It divided the whole American nation into *four* opposing political parties in the summer of 1860; the *Northern Democracy* under the lead of the "Little Giant," Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois; the *Southern Democracy* under the lead of John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky; the *Constitutional Union* party under the lead of John Bell of Tennessee; and the *Republican* party under the lead of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. The Republicans demanded the extinction of slavery in the states, and the prohibition of it in the territories, at once, by congressional legislation and amendment of the Constitution, resisting the execution of the fugitive slave law. The Constitutional Union party, evading the issues of the hour, tried to mediate the opposing elements by platitudes, powerless to impress earnest souls, or win for itself the respect of courageous men. The Southern Democrats insisted on slavery as national, or else secession from the Union. They required a strict fulfillment, by the North, of the constitutional guarantee regarding the right of the master to the rendition of his slave, or else the enjoyment of the reserved right to go out of the Union, plighted faith being no longer respected. The Northern Democrats, recognizing the fact of the constitutional right of the South to their slaves, and the right of revolution or secession as well, where national faith

and constitutional compact no longer availed, were yet unwilling to concede the claim of the South, that slavery is national, and goes by right wherever the flag floats, and that, not only slavery in the states, but also slavery in the territories, and even the slave trade itself on the high seas, is bound to be protected by Congress.

To the Northern Democrats ex-Governor Sibley belonged, and Minnesota, with the whole Northwest, ranged herself under the banner of Douglas. Momentous as the approaching canvass for the presidential election might be, clear and distinct as was the threat of secession, should the Republican party prevail, yet Mr. Sibley refused to acknowledge the claim of the South to separate possession of not only all the old slave states, but also Louisiana, Florida, and Texas, costing the United States \$500,000,000 of money, now to be erected into a foreign government, upon the basis of the denial of popular sovereignty or right of the people to choose their own institutions, the negation of the first broad principle in the Declaration of Independence, the assertion of the nationality and perpetuity of slavery, the control of the Mississippi river, and the unfurling of a new flag as the emblem of "*Slavery, the Corner Stone of Free Institutions!*" To disintegrate the Union and divide the territory for such a purpose as this was more than his strong Jeffersonian principles would allow. He remembered that the motto on the escutcheon of the United States, "*E Pluribus Unum*," dissolved neither the "*Pluribus*" nor the "*Unum*," and that the early sentiment of the Fathers, like that of "Old Virginia," was not the perpetuation, but the gradual removal, of slavery from the country; that the motto was reported by Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin, on the same day, July 4, 1776, and to the same convention, which, amid the ringing of bells and shouts of the people, carried, by acclamation, the "*Declaration*;" that it was a motto meant to express the idea, not of secession, but of "*Federal Union*;" and that, from the six quarterings and seven spaces of the national shield, arose the thirteen "stripes" transferred to the national flag, the thirteen "stars" representing the number of the original states forming the Union. A tradition so glorious, and an heirloom so precious, were not to be thrown away, for the scene of dual governments on the same soil, the one slave, the other free, both belligerent, and both doomed to extinction by mutual hate and ultimate foreign interference.

While maintaining, in his message to the state legislature, January 3, 1858, the doctrine of "non-intervention on the part of the United States, or of one state, with the domestic affairs of any other state or territory, as the only safe and correct principle, and the corner stone of the Union," thus leaving to states and territories the right to adjust and determine their own domestic affairs, he asserted, no less clearly, "the duty of the people to respond to any call that may be made upon us by the federal government for aid in repelling assaults, from within or without, upon that glorious union of states of which we now form a component part."<sup>1</sup> Descended from Puritan stock, yet bound by ties of relationship to men of the South, he saw in the rising storm the antagonism of two differing forms of civilization, sprung from two different *nuclei*, the one at Plymouth Rock, the other at Jamestown, Virginia, whose collision, in Kansas, echoed in the stroke of Brooks' cane upon Sumner's head in the senate of the United States. He was enlightened enough to know that the outcome of such a conflict could neither be doubtful nor long delayed.

A practical test of the conduct of ex-Governor Sibley was soon afforded. The presidential canvass approached. With seven others, Messrs. Gorman, Becker, Fridley, Edgerton, Cavanaugh, Phelps, and Rosser, Mr. Sibley was elected by the Democratic State Convention to represent the state in the Democratic National Convention to meet at Charleston, South Carolina, April 23, 1860, to nominate a president for the whole country. The Democratic vote of the state was, overwhelmingly, like that of the Democratic vote of the whole Northwest, in favor of Douglas. Every effort, however, to "instruct" the delegation to "cast its vote as a unit," and stand by Douglas in the great crisis, having been baffled, the delegation proceeded to Charleston, and held its first meeting on the morning of the day the national convention met. A dispatch to the city of St. Paul announced "*Defection in the Minnesota delegation.*"<sup>2</sup> It seemed that, under the plea of freedom, conscience, and the right of private judgment in public concerns, a portion of the delegation felt themselves at liberty to set aside the "*man*" who was the choice of the Democratic party in Minnesota, and, whensoever they pleased, vote for whomsoever they liked, uncontrolled by further regard for the public sentiment at

<sup>1</sup> Senate Journal, p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> Pioneer and Democrat, April 30, 1860.

home. Individualism collided with representative responsibility and representative relations. The effort of the delegation to act as a "unit" for Douglas, continuously, was defeated in Charleston, one member of the delegation withdrawing from its deliberations, and two others deserting Mr. Douglas.

Mr. Sibley having been selected to represent Minnesota in the National Committee on Credentials, the convention met at the appointed time and place. The capacious hall of the institute seated 2,500 persons, a hall whose frescoes were the work of the brother of the famous Garibaldi. *Not a Union flag streamed in the breeze or displayed its folds in the hall, save where it was introduced by Northern men.* The "Rattle-snake Flag" floated from the citadel during the whole time of the convention, while, from the seats assigned in the hall to Southern ladies, came storms of hisses for every delegate who dared to speak in favor of the Union. Loyal to the overwhelming sentiment of his state, Mr. Sibley and four others of the delegation stood by Douglas, with unwavering constancy, from first to last, upon every ballot and battle-field of the convention, doing honor to the "*man*" whose "*principles*" the state indorsed, and who had been so fast and firm a friend to the Territory and State of Minnesota alike, and had championed their cause in every crisis. In that memorable struggle at Charleston, between the opposing sections of the party, no less than fifty-seven ballots were cast for the presidential candidates, the two-thirds rule for a nomination having been adopted, and no nominee having been chosen. On the first ballot Mr. Douglas received 145½ votes; on the twenty-third, 152½; on the thirty-fifth, 152; on the fifty-seventh, 151½, coming within 15 votes of the two-thirds necessary to a choice. On the *ninth* ballot, the Minnesota delegation broke, in their vote, a portion deserting Mr. Douglas, and casting their votes, now for Andrew Johnson, and now for Daniel S. Dickinson. On the eighth day of the convention the South presented its "*ultimatum*," embodying the "only terms on which, in propriety, it could remain in the convention," viz., the nationality of slavery under the Constitution, the "slave pens" and "auction block," in the city of Charleston, being open to the inspection of the members of the convention! Upon the fifty-seventh ballot, the delegates from several Southern states "*seceded*." The convention was "*split*." It adjourned to

meet in Baltimore, June 18, 1860, in order to give the unrepresented states opportunity to supply their deficiency. June 23, 1860, Mr. Douglas, the favorite of Minnesota, received the nomination, amid the wildest and most uncontrollable excitement. The Democratic party of the North shed no tears over the dying convulsions of an administration which, in 1857, false to its own principles, abandoned the doctrine of popular sovereignty, swallowed the Lecompton constitution, held bondage to be national, and sought to "slavocratize" the American people. "Essences, tinctures, and pills" were useless at Baltimore. It died, at Charleston, with no mourners to lament its fate, and no successor to perpetuate its name.

The world knows what followed; how Mr. Lincoln was elected, November, 1860, what dangers attended his path, and with what madness South Carolina seceded, December 20, 1860. At half-past four o'clock, exactly, Friday afternoon, April 25, 1861, the Civil War commenced in Charleston Harbor, the first gun being fired at Fort Sumter. As a "War Democrat,"—often assailed and misrepresented by the extreme radical and party passion of the times,—Mr. Sibley remained loyal to the flag of his country, aiding to place regiments in the field of battle, contributing of his own means to their personal comfort and need, and laboring with rare devotion for the welfare of his country and state, till the proud day, when, from the balcony of the International Hotel in St. Paul, April 8, 1865, "he read a telegram announcing the surrender of Lee and his army, the crowd fairly exploding with delirious excitement." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hist. of St. Paul, etc., by Williams, p. 418.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**MILITARY CAREER OF EX-GOVERNOR SIBLEY.—PROPHETIC WORDS FULFILLED.—THE CIVIL WAR.—THE GREAT SIOUX OUTBREAK AND MASSACRE OF 1862, LED BY LITTLE CROW.—DESCRIPTION OF THE MASSACRE AND DEVASTATION.—DIMENSIONS OF ITS BARBARITIES.—CAUSES OF IT.—IMMEDIATE OCCASION OF IT.—THE OPPORTUNITY FOR IT.—ALL EYES TURNED TO THE HON. HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY, AS THE ONLY MAN FOR THE EMERGENCY.—NEW ULM ATTACKED.—JUDGE FLANDRAU TO THE RESCUE.—FORT RIDGLEY ATTACKED.—REDWOOD AGENCY ATTACKED.—GOVERNOR RAMSEY COMMISSIONS EX-GOVERNOR SIBLEY WITH THE RANK OF COLONEL AND POWERS OF A GENERAL COMMANDING THE STATE FORCES, AUGUST 20, 1862.—FIRST MILITARY EXPEDITION.—SCENES.—ENERGY AND WISDOM OF COLONEL SIBLEY.—CLAMOR OF THE PEOPLE.—UTTER DEFENSELESSNESS OF MINNESOTA.—POWERFUL FOE.—CRUSHING RESPONSIBILITY.—THE OBJECTS OF THE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE SIOUX, THREE IN NUMBER.—COLONEL SIBLEY'S MILITARY PREPARATIONS.—ADVANCES IN FORCE. REACHES FORT RIDGLEY.—MAJOR JOSEPH R. BROWN AND THE BURYING PARTY.—SNARED AT BIRCH COOLIE.—BATTLE OF BIRCH COOLIE.—MIDNIGHT MARCH OF COLONEL SIBLEY.—DEFEAT OF THE INDIANS.—BRAVE RESISTANCE OF MAJOR BROWN'S MEN.—IMPORTANCE OF THE VICTORY.—COLONEL SIBLEY RETURNS TO FORT RIDGLEY.—NOTICE TO LITTLE CROW.—CORRESPONDENCE.—THE CAPTIVES IN LITTLE CROW'S HANDS.—WISDOM NEEDED.—INSANE HOWLING AND BLIND ACCUSATION OF COLONEL SIBLEY BY THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS.—DIFFICULT TASK.—NOTES FROM COLONEL SIBLEY'S DIARY.—REINFORCEMENTS.—CAVALRY NEEDED.—PROVISIONS.—AMMUNITION.—GENERAL POPE'S VIEW OF THE SITUATION.—COLONEL SIBLEY'S STRATEGY.—ADVANCES.—DECISIVE BATTLE OF WOOD LAKE.—LITTLE CROW'S POWER BROKEN.—COLONEL SIBLEY PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL.—FLIGHT OF LITTLE CROW.—"CAMP RELEASE."—APPROACH TO AND CAPTURE OF THE CAMP.—THE CAPTIVES RELEASED.—THRILLING SCENES AROUND THE PERSON OF GENERAL SIBLEY.—TEARS, JOY, JUBILEE, CONVULSIVE TRANSPORTS.—DIVINE PROVIDENCE.—"DELIVERER OF MINNESOTA'S CAPTIVES!"—MILITARY COMMISSION.—THE INDIANS MANACLED.—FOUR HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE CHIEF CRIMINALS TRIED.—THREE HUNDRED AND THREE CONDEMNED TO DEATH.—ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED INDIANS SENT TO FORT SNELLING.—FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD FOR CAPTURE OF LITTLE CROW.—TELEGRAM TO WASHINGTON, "SIOUX WAR ENDED!"—BRITISH SYMPATHY WITH THE INDIANS AND WITH THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY.—RESULTS OF THIS CAMPAIGN.—GENERAL SIBLEY THE GENERAL COMMANDING THE MILITARY DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA.—DEATH SENTENCES OF THE CONDEMNED INDIANS COMMUTED BY PRESIDENT LINCOLN.—ORDER OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN TO GENERAL SIBLEY.**



NAMES OF THE DOOMED INDIANS.—MILITARY DISPATCHES.—ORDER OF GENERAL SIBLEY TO COLONEL STEPHEN MILLER.—THIRTY-EIGHT EXECUTED TOGETHER.—HISTORY OF THE EXECUTION.—TOUCHING SCENES.—HORRID SCENES.—THE SCAFFOLD.—ACTION OF CONGRESS.—SIOUX AND WINNEBAGOES REMOVED FROM THE STATE.—THE INDIANS NOT ALL IN THE WRONG.—FEARFUL RESPONSIBILITY.—PROGRESS OF THE WHITE RACE.—FATE OF THE INDIAN.—“OUR CIVILIZATION.”—WHITE MAN’S BRUTALITIES AND CRIMES.—DAY OF JUDGMENT.

WE come now to the *military* career of ex-Governor Sibley, more arduous and not less responsible than his political career. The same Providence that called him to be the “Prince of Pioneers” in Western wilds, the founder of the territory, and first governor of the state, chose him also to be the deliverer of the state, in the third year of her existence, from an Indian war whose massacres are unparalleled in the annals of American history. The prophetic words he spoke in Congress, Cassandra-like, foreboding retribution for the wrongs and outrages committed upon the red man, were now translated into fearful fact: The apocalyptic “Eagle” seemed to be flying, mid-heaven, crying with its terror-striking voice, “Onai! Onai! Onai! Woe! Woe! Woe! to the dwellers on the earth by reason of the angels yet to sound!”

The nation was under judgment. One woe, the Civil War, had begun. Another woe, the Indian massacre, now followed. On the morning of Monday, August 18, 1862, as if a volcano filled with lava of fire and blood had suddenly discharged its contents on the earth, the Sioux massacre burst upon the breast of Minnesota, terrific and unexampled, covering her soil with the blood of her children, and, amid horrors of devastation and death, spreading anguish and consternation on every side. The very hour when, dreaming of “Peace and Safety,” sudden destruction came. In that moment, when her citizens were congratulating each other at being so far removed from the scene of civil war, a merciless and furious enemy perfected a plan with marvelous secrecy, which, in an instant, let loose upon her unsuspecting settlers almost a thousand warriors of the most warlike of all the Indian tribes upon the continent, reveling in a carnival of indiscriminate and cruel butchery, killing men, women, and children, saving only girls of tender years, and comely females, to minister to their brutal appetites. Many of the young were ravished in presence of their dying parents, and in various instances the torch was applied to the dwellings in which the victims had met

their fate, before they ceased to exist. From Otter Tail lake and Fort Abercrombie on the Red river, southwardly, to the Iowa border, a distance of two hundred miles, and, eastward, from Big Stone lake, on the western shore, to Forest City in Meeker county, an area of 20,000 square miles, embracing no less than eighteen counties with a population of 40,000 souls, the wild war-whoop of the naked Indian, hideous in plumes and war-paint, the torch, the tomahawk, the scalping knife, the rifle, the arrow, and all the unchained passions of men insane with the desperation of revenge, asserted their fiendish supremacy. Old men staggering to the ground beneath the dull thud of the war-club, infants brought to an untimely birth, nailed to the door, or tossed to alight on the limbs of the thorn-tree, women transfixed to the ground after abuse had exhausted itself, and young men stabbed to the heart, nameless atrocities to which "massacre itself were a mercy,"<sup>1</sup> diversified the orgies of this carnival of hell, until the Moloch of cruelty and lust, glutted to satiety, could ask no more. Over this vast Aeldama, the sky, at night, was illumined with a lurid reflected glare from the conflagration of burning homes below. The blaze subsiding here, was answered by flames ascending there. Homes, beautiful a moment ago, now sank out of sight, in their ashes, forever. The moan of the dying and shriek of the helpless filled the air. In a week, and mostly within forty-eight hours, 1,000 persons perished in excruciating pain, 2,000 more were maimed sufferers from the outrage, and 8,000, who before were comparatively well-to-do, were thrown, as paupers, on the charity of individuals, or on the bounty of the state. A stream of 30,000 fugitives rushed down the Minnesota valley, seeking protection in the interior towns of the state, or fleeing to neighboring states, and even to their New England friends. Not less than \$2,000,000 worth of property was destroyed in a belt of two hundred and fifty miles, and in ten counties nothing was left. What remained to testify to the indescribable barbarity and unsmothered hate of the savages, in their descent upon a peaceful and prosperous community, was a vision of widespread desolation, dotted with hundreds of dead bodies, strewn everywhere, unsepulchered, and rotting in the sun.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Governor Ramsey's words.

<sup>2</sup> General Sibley's Private Notes, p. 5; The Sioux War, by Heard, pp. 112-116; Bryant's Indian Massacre in Minn., pp. 414-420; Hist. of Minnesota, by Neill, p. 727; Kirk's Illustr. Hist. of Minnesota, pp. 140-147. The Dakota War-Whoop, by Mrs. McConkey, pp. 75-80 Executive Documents, 1862, pp. 40-50.

As a result of the horror, reason reeled in many cases, and for some who had seen this infliction of brutalities upon their household, nothing was left but stupefaction at first, mechanical motion next, and, at last, the maniac's wild stare, and the maniac's sad wail.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Note.*—The annexed sad poem is worthy of preservation, not only because of its literary merit, but because of its theme. The incident on which it is founded was a deeply touching one. When Colonel Sibley dispatched McPhail and his command up the Minnesota valley to raise the siege of Fort Ridgely, Charles Nelson, a Swede, having walked, with bleeding feet, twenty-five miles, joined the expedition. His dwelling had been burned to the ground the day previous, his daughter outraged, the head of his wife Lola cleft by the tomahawk, and, while seeking to save himself, saw, for a moment, his two sons, Hans and Otto, rushing through the corn-field, the Indians in swift pursuit. Returning with the troops, under McPhail, and passing by the ruins of his home, he gazed about wildly, acting mechanically, and, closing the gate of the garden, asked: "When will it be safe to return?" *His reason was gone!* Captain Chittenden, of McPhail's command, while sitting a few days after under the Falls of Minnehaha, embodied in verse the sad tragedy, and has given to the world the following lines, which, with the incident just narrated, Mrs. Harriet E. B. McConkey has made a chapter by themselves, entitled "*The Maniac*," in her admirable work "*The Dakota War-Whoop*," p. 195.

Minne-ha-ha, laughing water,  
Cease thy laughing now for aye,  
Savage hands are red with slaughter  
Of the innocent to-day.

Ill accords thy sportive humor  
With their last despairing wail;  
While thou'rt dancing in the sunbeam,  
Mangled corpses strew the vale.

Change thy note, gay Minne-ha-ha;  
Let some sadder strain prevail—  
Listen, while a maniac wanderer  
Sighs to thee his woful tale:

"Give me back my Lola's tresses,  
Let me kiss them once again!  
She, who blest me with caresses,  
Lies unburied on the plain!

"See yon smoke; there was my dwelling;  
*That* is all I have of home!  
Hark! I hear their fiendish yelling,  
As I, houseless, childless, roam!

"Have they killed my Hans and Otto?  
Did they find them in the corn?  
Go and tell that savage monster  
Not to slay my youngest born.

"Yonder is my new-bought reaper,  
Standing 'mid the ripened grain,  
E'en my cow asks why I leave her  
Wand'ring, un milked, o'er the plain!

"Soldier, bury here my Lola;  
Place me also 'neath the sod;  
Long we lived and wrought together—  
Let me die with her—O God!

"Faithful Fido, you they've left me.  
Can you tell me, Fido, why  
*God at once has thus bereft me?*  
All I ask is here to die.

"O, my daughter Jennie, darling!  
Worse than death is Jennie's fate!"  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Nelson, as our troops were leaving,  
*Turned and shut his garden gate.*

The proximate causes which culminated in this awful tragedy may be summed up in a few words.

In the first place, the bands implicated had, under pressure, been induced to transfer, by treaty, in 1837 and again in 1851, to the United States Government, the possessory rights to all their immense lands, east and west of the Mississippi, soil that contained the graves of their fathers who had preoccupied it from time immemorial, and to consent to a removal to a *reservation*, where they would be protected from intrusion by the whites, and be generously provided for by a magnanimous government, with all the instrumentalities requisite to render them happy, self-sustaining and contented. In express terms, the treaties guaranteed that every promise made them should be faithfully performed. The solemnity of the obligation was emphasized. There was a general and intense disappointment when they found themselves deceived and transferred from their own magnificent country, a paradise on earth, abounding in forests and lakes which teemed with animal life, and beautified with scenery unrivaled anywhere, to an open prairie from which the buffalo, the elk, the deer, and other game, had been driven, and where they must, perforce, depend almost entirely upon the trader and the government for their daily bread. To aggravate their discontent, the provisions of the treaties were basely disregarded, appropriations by Congress for specific purposes were criminally and hopelessly merged in a general fund, annuities frequently suspended, in whole or in part, upon the slightest pretext, by the Indian bureau, and payments deferred for months after their maturity, thereby causing incalculable suffering to these wards of a great nation false to its promises and to its trust.

In the second place. The summer months, immediately preceding the *émeute*, had witnessed the assemblage, at the two Indian agencies of Redwood and Yellow Medicine, and at three distinct periods, of nearly 7,000 men, women, and children, of the Sioux bands, expressly called together by the agent himself, with the expectation that *the money, articles of food, and the clothing due them, would be forthcoming*, as he was advised by the commissioner of Indian affairs in Washington. Each time the poor, famishing, starving wretches were doomed to bitter disappointment, by the culpable and inexcusable delay of the government officials, and meantime, the supply of eatables in agency storehouses had been exhausted, and the piteous appeal

for food, so humiliating to the Indian's spirit, and the cry of women and children for clothing and bread, were made in vain. The begging and the buffalo dances brought nothing. Apart from other grievances, this state of things was enough to drive the warriors to desperation, and when the Acton murderers of a few whites, Sunday, August 17, 1862, returned to the main camp at the Redwood and Yellow Medicine agencies, they frankly confessed their crime and implored their kindred to protect them from arrest and punishment, and make common cause with them against the whites. The night following, the warriors, constituting the supreme authority in the bands, assembled, to the number of one hundred and fifty, formed the plan, and took the oath, of destruction, so faithfully executed, August 18 and 19, 1862,—an epoch of the most inhuman and remorseless butchery ever enacted on the American continent. Nothing was left for the Indians to do—their wives and children dead, and dying, for want of food—but die themselves, or exact, even at the cost of their own lives, a fire-lit, vengeful, bloody, and brutal atonement for all the wrongs inflicted upon them. The moment was opportune. "Time, at last, makes all things even." The United States were involved in a terrible strife. Already 657,000 men had gone to the seat of war; the president had, in addition, called out 300,000, and again 300,000 more;<sup>1</sup> the Sioux knew all this; the rumored capture of Washington had reached the Indian's ear; the two agencies had both been depleted of men to help the "Great Father," and Agent Galbraith had himself gone with the Renville Rangers, not keeping his promise to pay the Indians; Ink-pa-doo-tah's massacre remained unavenged; and now was the time to organize the "*Tee-ye-to*," the "Soldier's Lodge," and repossess the state. Such the situation. The Indian's complaint, "forced from home and all his treasure," was not "mere poetry." Outalissi's tears were not affectation. The Queen of Pocasset's wrath was not without ground. Tah-wai-o-ta-doo-tah's signal-gun was provoked. Little Crow was but the successor of Osceola and Black Hawk, of Tecumseh and King Philip.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Seaver's Goodrich's Hist. United States, p. 811.

<sup>2</sup> Our Indian system is a system of organized robbery and a disgrace to the nation.—Bishop Whipple.

There is not, to-day, an old citizen of Minnesota who will not shrug his shoulders as he speaks of the dishonesty which accompanied the purchase of the lands of the Sioux.—Heard's Sioux War, p. 351.

The man, for this momentous crisis in the history of the state, was the Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, ex-governor of the state. To him all eyes were instinctively turned. His perfect knowledge of the Indian tribes and character, their habit of life, and mode of warfare, his familiarity with the Sioux and French languages, the Indian respect for his person and name, all pointed him out as the man of all men to be intrusted with the main command of the military forces of the state, and of her expedition against the hostile bands.

The news of the outbreak, Monday, August 18, 1862, at Redwood Agency, where Captain Marsh and his men were ambushed and slaughtered, reached St. Paul on the afternoon of Tuesday, the nineteenth, by special messenger. The Sabbath day preceding this Monday was the day on which, in New Ulm, a godless town of infidel Germans, *Jesus Christ*, the Saviour of men, displayed and paraded in mock effigy, and covered with vile and blasphemous epithets, was publicly burned, amid scoffing and laughter and jeers.<sup>1</sup> The day following, Fort Ridgley was attacked. Godfearing men, however, hastened to save the defenseless women and children of New Ulm, the fort being defended by its own brave garrison reinforced by the Renville Rangers, under Major Galbraith, and a company of men from Fort Ripley, under command of Captain Sheehan, in all two hundred and thirty men. Both these places had been assailed by the Indians in force, the former saved, in the most gallant manner, through the quick, spontaneous, and timely relief brought by Hon. Charles E. Flandrau of the supreme court, who sped to its succor, forcing a march of thirty-two miles in one day; the latter by the heroic bravery of its defenders as above described. The defenses of New Ulm, August 19th and 23d, and of Fort Ridgley, 20th and 21st, were among the most brilliant exploits of the Indian War. That by Colonel Flandrau, most fortunate indeed, prevented, at that critical moment, the massacre from penetrating into the interior of the state. Commissioned as colonel commanding the southwestern frontier of Minnesota, his line of defensive posts from New Ulm to the Iowa border, and dispersion of Indian bands that hung on his line, were intended to drive the bands in Lower Minnesota back on the lines and front of ex-Governor Sibley, in his forward movement against Little Crow.

<sup>1</sup> Dakota War-Whoop, by Mrs. McConkey, p. 81.

Tuesday afternoon, August 19, 1862, on receipt of the news that the massacre had broken out at the Redwood Agency, his Excellency, Governor Ramsey, hastened at once to Mendota to urge upon Governor Sibley the general command of the forces in the field, and the special campaign against Little Crow, chief of the Sioux, and head of the "Lightfoot Band." Governor Sibley, consenting upon condition of non-interference with his plans, *carte-blanche* to conduct the campaign as his judgment dictated, and cordial support of the executive, *was commissioned* on the evening of the same day, as colonel commanding the state forces, and clothed with the power of a general officer.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
STATE OF MINNESOTA.

*Alexander Ramsey, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Military Forces of the State, to Henry H. Sibley, of Dakota County, sends Greeting:*

Reposing especial trust and confidence in your valor, patriotism, and fidelity, I have appointed you, the said Henry H. Sibley, colonel, and commander of the Indian expedition. You are therefore by these presents appointed and commissioned as such colonel, etc.

To have and to hold the said office of colonel, etc., together with all the rights, powers and emoluments to the said office belonging, or by law in anywise appertaining, until this appointment and commission shall be by me or other lawful authority superseded or annulled, or expire by force or reason of any law of this state.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my name and caused the seal of the adjutant general of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the capitol in the city of St. Paul, this nineteenth day of August, 1862, and of the state the fifth.

By the Commander-in-Chief,

[SEAL.]

ALEX. RAMSEY.

OSCAR MALMBOS, *Adjutant General*.

Early the next day, Wednesday, with four companies of the Sixth regiment, from Fort Snelling, he hastened to St. Peter, one hundred and twenty miles away, and entered the place Thursday evening, August 21st, after a weary march through the Big Woods, from Belle Plaine, dispatching, the following day, and again the next day, Saturday, reinforcements to Colonel Flandrau, in all two hundred and fifteen men. These troops arrived, Sunday morning, August 24th, too late to share in the gallant defense of New Ulm, the battle against nearly six hundred Indians having been won the day previous, Saturday, August 23d. With one hundred and fifty-three wagons, laden with women and children, sick and wounded, besides many others on foot, 2,000 in all, Colonel



Flandrau retreated from the consumed and evacuated town to Mankato, only twenty-five houses left standing in New Ulm.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Sibley, satisfied that Fort Ridgley could safely hold out several days, resolved not to risk a forward movement from St. Peter with an inadequate force. The Sioux were in the field, in large numbers, able to concentrate upon him 1,500 picked warriors, well armed. His own force, such as it was, and even might yet be for days to come, would be none too large, and none too well furnished, to cope with a foe so formidable. All that stood between the state and utter destruction, now that Colonel Flandrau had retreated from New Ulm, and his extemporized force had gone to their homes, was the column that might be formed under Colonel Sibley, which, if surprised or routed, could only share the unhappy fate of Captain Marsh and his men. In short, his expedition against Little Crow was now the one hope of Minnesota. In other parts of the state brave men maintained gallant defenses against the marauding Indian bands, but here was the one hope on which all eyes were fixed.

And what determination possessed the mind of Colonel Sibley, his own words abundantly show. Expecting to advance the following day, he wrote to headquarters, August 25th, "Unless you can now and effectually crush the insurrection, the state is ruined, and some of its fairest portions will revert for years into the possession of those miserable wretches, who, of all demons in human shape, are among the most cruel and ferocious. To appreciate this, one must see, as I have, the mutilated bodies of their victims. My heart is steeled against them, and, *if I have the means, and can catch them*, I will sweep them with the besom of death. Do not think there is exaggeration in the horrible pictures given by individuals. They fall short of the dreadful reality."<sup>2</sup> And yet he knew that "*discretion is the better part of valor*," and that Cæsar's "*festina lente*" meant quick victory. Abused by the clamor of the people, and the inconsiderate voice of the press, shouting "On to Fort Ridgley!" just as the nation, to its sorrow, had heard the insane cry, "On to Richmond!" he yet disregarded this very natural but very irrational impulse and im-

<sup>1</sup> For a fine portrait of Colonel Flandrau, and full account of the defense of New Ulm, and also important historical notices, see "Magazine of Western History, Illustrated," April, 1888, pp. 655-666; Heard's Sioux War, p. 79; Indian Massacre, by Bryant, p. 426; Neill's History of Minnesota, p. 728; Dakota War-Whoop, pp. 101-110.

<sup>2</sup> Executive Documents, 1862, p. 420.

patience. None knew or appreciated the crisis better than he. He urged reinforcements, and called for Springfield rifles, fixed ammunition, and mounted men, instead of old Belgian and Austrian rifles already condemned, and without cartridges fitting the bore; and instead of infantry alone, an Indian war demanding an efficient cavalry force, trained men, and arms of precision, of the best kind. The state had only a small quantity of cartridges fitted for a few cases of the old Harper's Ferry musket. In the words of Colonel Sibley, "There were neither arms nor ammunition such as were needed; no transportation, no commissary supplies, no railways, and the woods leading to the frontier were just as Nature had left them, almost impassable to heavy teams. Little Crow could concentrate 1,500 warriors well skilled in the use of arms, and subsidize, at any time, the powerful kindred bands on the upper prairies, besides the Mississippi Chippewas, and the Winnebagoes, near Mankato. No military force could be looked for outside of the state. Her sole dependence was on the patriotism and bravery of her own citizens."<sup>1</sup> "How inadequate," says Adjutant General Oscar Malmros, in his report to Governor Ramsey, "was our supply of arms and ammunition, the hundreds of clamorous demands for these things pouring in from every section of the state, how unprepared we were to meet such demands, and how destitute of all other means to carry on such a war, is still vivid in the recollection of all."<sup>2</sup> The difficulties Colonel Sibley had to overcome were "Legion." All the approved firearms had gone to the South. Artillery ammunition existed nowhere, save in the frontier forts already beleaguered. Only three six-pounders could be had. Accouterments were wanting. Lead teapots and lead water-pipe had to be moulded into bullets. To swedge the old ammunition, to fit weapons for which it was never intended, proved vain, and the best to be done was to convert it to grape-shot and canister, whose cases were made in the tinshops of St. Peter, unused to artillery ware.

This was not all. Medical and commissary stores were needed, and had to be provided. Refugees, pouring into the town, homeless and foodless, had to be cared for. With the wounded, sick, and maimed, the ingathering troops augmenting the mass, the population of St. Peter had swollen to

<sup>1</sup> Sibley's Private Manuscript Notes on the Sioux War, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Executive Documents, 1862, p. 408.

10,000. The flour mill at Mankato was burned. But one existed at St. Peter. The starving multitude cried for bread. Colonel Sibley receives an order to take charge of the whole situation. His word is law. A huge bakery was set up, a huge butcher's shop was extemporized, a soup institution was called into being. Stoves lined the streets, tents and shanties the vacant lots. Mothers hugged to their breasts the babes they had saved, children clung to their parents' limbs, all waiting for something to keep life alive. No less than 12,000 meals a day were served, 8,000 rations of beef alone, to the hungry refugees, while the eye rested on wild herds of cattle and live stock, plunging mad from the prairie, and charging on every side, unfed, affrighted, ferocious, voracious.<sup>1</sup>

Had the strength of Colonel Sibley been less than that of a Hercules, or his shoulders less broad than those of an Atlas, he had sunk beneath the weight of care and responsibility put upon him. Insanity alone could shout "On to Fort Ridgley!" under such circumstances, his troops amounting, as yet, to scarce more than four companies of the Sixth regiment, reinforcements having been sent to Colonel Flaudran. Moreover, to rush wildly, spurred alone by a sense of the justice of *lex talionis*, regardless of wiser and wider forecast, would have caused the instant slaughter of the captive women and children still in Little Crow's hands. To Colonel Sibley's mind, the objects of the expedition were (1) the defeat of the Indians in some decisive engagement, (2) the release of the captives, (3) the punishment of the guilty murderers and criminals, (4) the driving of the Sioux from the state. He pursued the only course a wise, safe, humane, and successful commander could have taken.

And yet, contending with such difficulties, Colonel Sibley was able to move after Little Crow on Monday, August 25, 1862, having completed his work of organization, and shaped into order a mass of heterogeneous elements. Between the period of his commission, August 19th, and Monday, August 25th, all that the executive, the adjutant general, and the state could do, and all that Colonel Sibley's appeals could do, was done. According to official proclamation, and military order, the remaining six companies of the Sixth regiment, Colonel Crooks, two hundred additional mounted men of the Cullen Guard, Colonel McPhail, one hundred more of mounted citi-

<sup>1</sup> See Bryant's Indian Massacre, etc., p. 431.

zens, yet both unenlisted, besides several volunteer companies, reported *by Sunday evening, August 24th*, the day of the evacuation of New Ulm, to Colonel Sibley, at St. Peter. The rifles had been sent, and the whole force of Colonel Sibley now amounted to 1,400 men, the only deficiency being the lack of sufficient rations and ammunition.

Not a moment's time was lost.<sup>1</sup> Though needing much, yet, with characteristic energy and activity, Colonel Sibley ordered Colonel McPhail, with one hundred and eighty men of the mounted troops, to advance, scouting toward Fort Ridgley, Monday evening, August 25th; an advance of the whole column, in force, being ordered the next day, Tuesday, August 26th. Thursday, August 28th, Colonel Sibley, with his troops, arrived at the fort, McPhail's vanguard having reached there the day previous. The joy was unbounded, and the greetings were cordial, the brave garrison receiving lavish compliments for its noble defense of the fort. Intrenchments were dug, enfilading cannon were placed, strong pickets thrown out, a camp formed, the *impedimenta* arranged, the whole serving as the base of future operations and needed supply for further advance. On the evening of the same day, the reinforcements Colonel Sibley had sent to Colonel Flandrau having returned to St. Peter, reported at Fort Ridgley. Of the Cullen Guard, all but ninety went back to their homes, some suspecting, others not dreaming, that a battle was imminent. This deficiency was supplied by the arrival of forty-seven men under Captain Sterrett, and also by a portion of the Seventh regiment of Minnesota Volunteers, under Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, September 1, 1862.

The importance of the situation could not be overestimated. After the retreat of Colonel Flandrau from New Ulm, the towns of Mankato, St. Peter, Henderson, Glencoe, and all the settlements on the frontier, were still at the mercy of Little Crow. Any moment he might descend on Mankato, and, if successful, speed to St. Peter, and get into Sibley's rear, repeating, on a larger scale, the scenes at Redwood, New Ulm, and Fort Ridgley, and the atrocious outrages already committed. Before an efficient check could be put to his

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<sup>1</sup> There were unavoidable delays over which the colonel commanding had no control. To meet the foe unprepared would be to rush to unbidden death, and the rifles were found to be useless even in the hands of the most skillful in their use. They must camp at St. Peter until the defect could be remedied, or others brought from St. Paul.—*Dakota War-Whoop*, p. 93.

course, infinite damage might come to Minneapolis and St. Paul, and the whole state, the Mississippi Chippewas and Winnebagoes being ready to rise and assist him. Anticipating his wily adversary, who, under pretext of hasty retreat, was only preparing to swoop down, like an "abomination that makes desolate," upon the towns just named, and mindful, also, of the sad duties of sepulture yet to be discharged to the mangled forms of the dead, Colonel Sibley, yielding reluctantly to intense pressure and persuaded against his serious doubt, ordered Major Joseph R. Brown to advance up the valley, with a detachment of one hundred and fifty men, to bury the dead, relieve any survivors of the massacre, and "feel after" Little Crow. His instructions were most explicit, viz., not to separate the force under any circumstances, nor go into camp near a mound or ravine, but only on the open prairie, with pickets thrown out. Should attack occur, they could defend themselves till he marched to their relief. The detachment divided, part crossing the river, part remaining this side, both exploring and reconnoitering, and reunited on the Fort Ridgley side, going, however, into camp on the evening of September 1st, at Birch Coolie, opposite the Redwood Agency, having found and buried eighty-five mutilated bodies. No Indians were seen, and none suspected as near. The location of the camp was most unfortunate.

On the morning of September 2, 1862, at early dawn, the camp at Fort Ridgley, and all in the fort, were thrown into a state of high excitement. Owing to the conformation of the valley, and its acoustic properties, sound was readily transmitted for many miles. Volleys of musketry were distinctly heard, about 4:30 A. M., by placing the ear to the ground. Colonel Sibley, fearing that Major Brown's detachment had been engaged by the Indians, instantly hurried forward a second detachment of two hundred and forty men and two six-pounders, under Colonel McPhail, to their relief.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The books are in error, here, as frequently in other places. The Dakota War-Whoop says Colonel Sibley sent "two companies and a six-pound howitzer." The adjutant general's report says "one hundred and fifty-five men and a mountain howitzer." Heard's History of the Sioux War repeats the adjutant's report, as does Bryant, also, in his Indian Massacre. The best evidence is Colonel Sibley's letters, dated on the day of the transaction. Writing to his wife, September 2, 1862, he says, "I have just dispatched *two hundred and forty men, with two six-pounders, to the aid of my troops*, and the rest of my command are ready to take the field at a moment's notice. Do not be disturbed by apprehension of the Indians. Only in case my column should be defeated need you feel any alarm. In that case, the enemy might sweep the settlements to the Mississippi. Until that happens, which I by no means intend shall be done, you may rest securely, etc., etc."—Letters to My Wife in 1862, p. 4.

The rest of the troops were ordered to prepare to march at a moment's notice. At 2 P. M. the same day, September 2d, the report of one of McPhail's guns told Major Brown, who had been severely pressed by the Indians, that help was at hand, and the sound inspired the beleaguered and stricken camp with courage and joy. The Indians, getting into the timber of the coolie between the camp and the approaching relief, prepared, by various maneuvers, to cut it off, firing a whole broadside into its face, at first, from the rifles of over three hundred Sioux, most of them mounted. McPhail concluded to halt and hold his position till morning, sending a messenger, the intrepid Sheehan, to Fort Ridgley, to inform Colonel Sibley that his detachment was in danger of being surrounded, and that Brown's camp was silent. McPhail's signal gun had been heard at the fort, and the commander knew then that his forces were heavily engaged, and the moment Sheehan arrived the long roll was beaten, and the whole force instantly ordered to advance, quick time, to the scene of action. It was sundown, September 2, 1862. The "*midnight march*" was made. At two o'clock in the morning, September 3d, Colonel Sibley reached the pickets of the second detachment,—three miles in front of the coolie beyond which was the camp of the first detachment,—dead or alive, none could tell. Conducted quietly to the second detachment, all were ordered to lie down and rest, the whole force to be roused before dawn, without sound of trumpet or drum.

The order was obeyed. Before dawn, silent as the stars, the whole force stood in battle array, ready to move. As was expected, the Indians appeared in force and commenced firing on Sibley's troops. The fire was returned with vigor and effect, the Indians surprised at the magnitude of the force, and retreating into the timber of the coolie. "The discharges of the artillery soon drove them out of the woods to a distance which rendered their firearms ineffective, and, refusing to make any further stand, they were allowed to retreat for lack of an adequate mounted force to pursue them."<sup>1</sup> The fatal mistake—if it could be called only a mistake—of the return of the unenlisted mounted men, but a day or two previous, to their homes, was now apparent. Little Crow effected his escape, after severe loss in killed and wounded. The scene at Major Brown's camp was distressing indeed. No less than

<sup>1</sup> Executive Documents, Adjutant General's Report of the Battle of Birch Coolie, September 3, 1862.



ninety horses had been killed, thirteen of his detachment slain, three mortally wounded, and forty-four more or less injured, among them three of Colonel Sibley's staff officers. The tents of the detachment had been riddled with bullets, some perforated in a hundred places. The death of every man had been certain had the troops not remained prostrate on the earth, so intense was the rain of destruction. With their bayonets, tin cups, knives, and camp utensils, they formed to themselves little earthworks, while prostrate, to shield them against the merciless volleys of the enemy. The swollen bodies of the horses served also a similar purpose. For thirty-one hours the men had been without food or water, and yet contrived to repel the foe. When relieved, they had but five rounds of ammunition for each man. The wonder is that every man was not massacred. Braver troops never fought at Thermopylæ, or the passes of Cerro Gordo and Angostura. Better soldiers never fought at Malvern Hill or Gettysburg. The one great defect, throughout the whole campaign, was the lack of a cavalry force sufficient to make the victory complete. The casualties to Colonel Sibley's force were slight, his management of the action being such as to secure the greatest advantage at the least amount of loss to his own men.

The battle of Birch Coolie, on the second and third of September, 1862, was the severest and bloodiest of all the actions thus far, in the Indian campaign, and justified every precaution taken by the commander of the expedition. In the words of the adjutant general's report to Governor Ramsey, "It saved the towns of Mankato and St. Peter from the destruction contemplated by the savages. They had left Yellow Medicine, and vicinity, with the avowed intention of attacking these towns on the Minnesota, but, happily for the inhabitants of them, met with signal defeat at Birch Coolie."<sup>1</sup> After burying the dead, and placing the wounded in the hard wagons, with the long grass of the prairie as their only mattress, Colonel Sibley returned to Fort Ridgley to prepare for a final advance upon Little Crow's camp. Some fractional companies of the Third regiment, Minnesota Volunteers, one hundred and twenty-five in number, paroled as prisoners at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, having returned to the state, now joined the expeditionary force against the Sioux, under the command of Major Abraham E. Welch.

<sup>1</sup> Executive Documents, 1862, p. 453.



Mindful of the large number of captives in Little Crow's hands, and anxious by whatever "craft" he possessed to know their condition, and by any means secure their release, Colonel Sibley, before retiring from Birch Coolie, aware that the Indians would revisit the field, left a note for Little Crow, attached to a "split stake" fixed in upright position on the battle ground. It was as follows:

*If Little Crow has any proposition to make, let him send a half-breed to me and he shall be protected in and out of camp.*

H. H. SIBLEY,  
Colonel Commanding Military Expedition.

This was the opening of a correspondence between Little Crow and Colonel Sibley, during which, in various ways, it was ascertained, precisely as Colonel Sibley, so familiar with the Indian character, believed, that, had the attack been made by him upon the Indians while in their own camp, or before they had deserted it, it was their determination to tomahawk every captive in their possession.<sup>1</sup> Their only hope of any mercy lay in their detention of so many helpless women and children. Colonel Sibley's one, first, and paramount, aim was to secure the release of these suffering people, and not precipitate the sacrifice of their lives. Any impression given to Little Crow that no mercy would be shown would be the signal for another indiscriminate massacre. Any art by which he could avert a calamity so dire, he felt bound, in humanity, and before God, to practice. And yet, to do this in such way as to show firmness on the one hand, without appearance of threat on the other, was the problem to be solved. Hence the phraseology of the cleft stake on the battle-field, the retreat to Fort Ridgley, and the invitation to Little Crow to communicate "if" he had any communication to make. After the captives were released, it would be time to tell Little Crow what his fate would be! And if not released, as yet, then, by some means, the Indians must be fought outside of, and away from, their immediate camp, as far as possible.

Impatient and unreflecting men could not understand this. The only sound welcome to their ears was the cry "*On to Little Crow's Camp!*" It was in such a crisis as this, charged with responsibilities severe enough to crush the stoutest heart, the true greatness of Colonel Sibley's character appeared. Accused of remissness, negligence, cowardice, and even of "desire

<sup>1</sup> Heard's Sioux War, p. 186; Dakota War-Whoop, p. 211.

to be friendly" with red-handed miscreants, howled at on all sides, the suggestion of his removal having been made, he still insisted that none should reply to the foul slanders in the newspapers. Unmoved by calumny, and undaunted by threats, he consulted his own superior judgment, and walked towering over those whose tongues were afterward silenced, and cheeks made red, to their shame, when they saw the success of his plans, and heard the applause from his state and the nation.

The correspondence between Colonel Sibley and Little Crow, and two friendly Indians in Little Crow's camp, was the following, and is taken from Colonel Sibley's private journal. In reply to the note attached to the split stake, Little Crow returned the following answer, assigning the *reason* for the massacre, his participation and that of the Winnebagoes in the same, his desire that Governor Ramsey should know the facts, his boast of the possession of many prisoners, and requesting an immediate answer to his communication:

YELLOW MEDICINE, September 7, 1862.

DEAR SIR: For what reason we have commenced this war, I will tell you. It is on account of Major Galbraith, we made a treaty with the Government a beg for what little we do get and then can't get it till our children are dieing with hunger. It was with the traders that commence. Mr. A. J. Myrick told the Indians they would eat grass or their own dung, then Mr. Forbes told the lower Sioux that were not men then Robert he was making with his friends how to defraud us of our money, if the young braves have push the white man, I have done this myself; So I want you to let the Governor Ramsey know this. I have a great many prisoners women and children it aint all our fault the Winnebagoes was in the engagement, two of them was killed. I want you to give me answer by bearer all at present. Yours truly.

his  
LITTLE M CROW.  
mark.

Next day, September 8th, General Sibley, under flag of truce, sent the following reply, ambiguous in one of its expressions:

LITTLE CROW: You have murdered many of our people without any sufficient cause. *Return me the prisoners, under a flag of truce, and I will talk to you like a man.* I have sent your message to Governor Ramsey.

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Colonel Commanding Military Expedition.*

No response to this demand for the return of the prisoners was made. On September 12th, the crafty warrior reopened communication, under flag of truce, referring to the prisoners

as doing very well, and demanded not only a message from Governor Ramsey himself, but, while still retaining the prisoners, appealed to the old personal friendship of General Sibley, on which, as a ground, he hoped that some way might be made to secure peace for his people, and exemption from punishment.

RED IRON VILLAGE, OR WAY-AU-AKAN.

To Hon. H. H. Sibley:

we have in ma-wa-kan-ton band one hundred and fifty-five prisoners — not included the Sisitons and warpeton prisoners, then we are waiting for the Sisiton what we are going to do with the prisoners they are coming down — they are at Lake quiparle now, the words that I want to the governor I want to hear from him also, and I want to know from you as a friend what way that it can make peace for my people — in regard to prisoners they fair with our children or ourself just as well as us.

Your truly friend,

LITTLE CROW.

At the same time, the bearer of this communication bore also another and *private* communication from two of General Sibley's old friends in Little Crow's hands, and also whispered the secret that, ever since the defeat at Birch Coolie, *dissatisfaction* existed in Little Crow's camp. The letter was the following:

WAY-AWA-KAN, Sept. 10, '62.

Col. H. H. Sibley, Fort Ridgley:

DEAR SIR: You know that Little Crow has been opposed to me in everything that our people have had to do with the whites. He has been opposed to everything in the form of civilization and Christianity. I have always been in favor of, and of late years have done everything of the kind that has been offered to us by the Government and other good white people — he has now got himself into trouble that we know he can never get himself out of, and he is trying to involve those in the murder of the poor whites that have been settled in the border; but I have been kept back with threats that I should be killed if I did anything to help the whites. But if you will now appoint some place for me to meet you, myself and the few friends that I have will get all the prisoners that we can, and with our families go to whatever place you will appoint for us to meet.

I would say further, that the mouth of the Red Wood, Candiohi on the north side of the Minnesota, or the head of the Cottonwood river — one of these three places, I think, would be a good place to meet.

Return the messenger as quick as possible, we have not much time to spare.

Your true friend,

WABASHAW.

TAOPEE.

General Sibley, with the art of a genuine strategist and diplomat, replied, the same day, September 12, 1862, to both these communications:

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY EXPEDITION,  
September 12, 1862.

*To Wabashaw and Taopee:*

I have received your private message. I have come up here with a large force to punish the murderers of my people. It was not my purpose to injure any innocent person. *If you and others who have not been concerned in the murders and expeditions, will gather yourselves, with all the prisoners, on the prairie in full sight of my troops, and when the white flag is displayed by you, a white flag will be hoisted in my camp, and then you can come forward and place yourselves under my protection.* My troops will be all mounted in two days' time, and in three days from this day I expect to march. There must be no attempt to approach my column or my camp, except in open day, and with a flag of truce conspicuously displayed. I shall be glad to receive all true friends of the whites with as many prisoners as they can bring, and I am powerful enough to crush all who attempt to oppose my march, and to punish those who have washed their hands in innocent blood.

*I sign myself the friend of all who were friends of your great American Father.*

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Colonel Commanding Military Expedition.*

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY EXPEDITION,  
September 12, 1862.

*To Little Crow, Sioux Chief:*

I have received your letter to-day. You have not done as I wished in giving up the prisoners taken by your people. It would be better for you to do so. I told you I had sent your former letter to Governor Ramsey, but I have not yet had time to receive a reply. You have allowed your young men to commit some murders since you wrote your first letter. *This is not the way to make peace.*

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Colonel Commanding Military Expedition.*

So ended the correspondence. It speaks for itself, revealing a situation than which none could be more critical or delicate. With the increase of dissatisfaction in Little Crow's camp, the outraged war party, stung by defeat, might rise any moment and extinguish in death the unhappy captives still in their power. By an indiscretion on the part of Colonel Sibley the same result might ensue. Slandering tongues, far away from the scene, and minds incompetent to understand, or intent to destroy, for partisan ends, the name of the man on whom, most of all, the state relied in this crisis, might busy themselves as they listed. A true knowledge of the situation will ever vindicate the wisdom of his correspondence with Little Crow, and repel the insane charge of timid inaction and guilty delay. If anything more were needed to clinch the facts of the times, the private letters of Colonel Sibley to his wife will be deemed as all-sufficient.

What we have here is an itinerary, and a journal as well, written in confidence, under the sanctity of the most endearing relationship on earth, and where, if anywhere, we must expect to find the truth. It unveils the whole situation others could not see, and gives the reasons others could not understand. It explains fully the so-called delay period of three weeks, *i. e.* from September 3d, the battle of Birch Coolie, to September 23d, the battle of Wood Lake.

"FORT RIDGLEY, September 5, 1862.—I am well this morning but sorely fatigued after the forced march to the rescue of the companies hemmed in by the savages at Birch Coolie, particulars of which I wrote you yesterday. *I have placed my commission at the disposal of Governor Ramsey in view of the complaints made about delay, etc., etc.,* and so, perhaps he may relieve me, and permit me to go home, which I am quite anxious to do. The responsibilities of my position are so great that I am deprived of necessary rest. I can hardly sleep at all. The Indians are in force. They retreated in haste when I reached the beleaguered camp at the coolie, but did not go far, as they knew *I had no cavalry* and could not overtake them with my infantry. We shall have a battle shortly, when I receive *the cartridges and rations* indispensable to an advance movement. It is hard, indeed, while we are fighting, and doing our best, to have a 'set of ninnies and poltroons' abusing us at home."

"SEPTEMBER 7TH.—You will have seen the account of the attack on my detachment at Birch Coolie. \* \* \* I was the first man to enter the doomed camp, after driving the savages, and as the survivors emerged from the holes they had dug in the ground, in and around their tent, a more delighted set of mortals I never saw. There lay ninety-one horses, shot dead, others hobbling about wounded. The scene was sickening. \* \* \* I hope the governor will appoint another officer to succeed me in command of the expedition, for I am nearly worn-out with fatigue, night-watching, and the labor necessary to get the raw material I have to work with into a condition fit for a campaign. *I get curses because I do not accomplish impossibilities.* I cannot safely go ahead without a sufficient supply of ammunition and rations, *in both of which essentials we are sadly deficient.* It would not do for me, under present circumstances, to resign my commission, peremptorily, for the safety of the state would be jeopardized if one, less experienced in Indian wiles and mode of warfare than I am, should be assigned to the command of the only force which stands between the central portion of the state and desolation."

"SEPTEMBER 8TH.—I received a letter from Little Crow yesterday, by the bearers of a flag of truce. He writes (his amanuensis is an educated half-breed), that the reason the war commenced was *because he could not get the provisions and other supplies due the Indians, that the women and children were starving and he could get no satisfaction from Major Galbraith, the United States Agent, that he had many white women and children prisoners, etc., etc.* I have sent back the men to-day, with a written reply telling Little Crow to *deliver the captives to me, and I would then talk with him like a man.* What he

will do remains to be seen. The half-breeds, whom I know, say that the mixed-bloods are not permitted to leave the camp and are virtually prisoners, as most of them are believed to sympathize with the whites. They assure me that the Indians are determined to *give us* battle, at or near the Yellow Medicine, and are sanguine of success. *I do sincerely hope they will not change their programme.*"

"SEPTEMBER 10TH.—We are waiting the result of my message to Little Crow, demanding the delivery of the captives. I expect an answer to-day. This question embarrasses me very much, for should I make an advance movement, *two or three hundred white women and children might be murdered in cold blood. I must use what craft I possess to get these poor creatures out of the hands of the 'red devils,' and then pursue the latter with fire and sword.* I am in want of cartridges, hard bread, and clothing for the soldiers, which I hope will be forthcoming very soon, etc., etc."

"SEPTEMBER 11TH.—The ammunition train is expected to-day, and as soon as the clothing is received, we will go ahead. I see that Governor Ramsey has requested the secretary of war to constitute a new military district, or department, for the Northwest, and place in command a man skilled in Indian warfare. I sincerely hope he will do so, as it would relieve me, and allow me to go home. Since the affair of Birch Coolie, in which our men were attacked and lost so many, *the howlers in St. Paul seem to be checked in their onslaughts*, as they find that the job we have undertaken is far from being an insignificant one, and that the policy I have pursued is the only one to save the settlements."

"SEPTEMBER 13TH.—I have nearly perfected my arrangements, and intend to move on. I have another communication from Little Crow. The bearers of the flag of truce say there is *a party in the camp opposed to the war. Little Crow evidently begins to quake.* I expect to reach him and fight him within a week. I learn that General Pope has been designated to command the new department of the Northwest, in which case I shall soon ask to be relieved from my command."

"SEPTEMBER 14TH.—I had issued orders to march to-morrow morning, *but a violent rain-storm*, which still continues, will necessarily retard our move forward."

"SEPTEMBER 16TH.—*It does seem as if the fates were determined to oppose my advance, as the rain-storm has continued so long that it has saturated everything.* I fear it has raised the streams and made the prairie roads worse than ever. Advices corroborate the previous reports that the Indians are in force on this side of Lac qui Parle."

"SEPTEMBER 17TH.—It has cleared off to-day, and to-morrow we shall cross to the south side of the river and go in search of 'my friend Little Crow' (!) with whom I have kept up a correspondence, and now '*have a Crow to pick!*' I hope General Pope will take it into his head to come up here and relieve me from this laborious leadership. At any rate, I shall give up my commission when the campaign is fought to a close, for, by that time, I shall have done my duty as a good citizen, and I long to get home to my dear wife and children. I am so burdened with responsibility that I sleep but little, and what little I have enjoyed *has been without undressing*

*ever since I left Mendota, as I have to make frequent visits to the sentinels around our large camp, to keep them on the alert against an attack in the darkness. So I feel dirty and uncomfortable. I shall have a busy time to-morrow, etc., etc."*

If all censure is not disarmed in presence of such a revelation, or if the disclosure is regarded as a colored representation of the facts, the official dispatches covering the same period ought to satisfy every complaint, and should have hushed every murmur.<sup>1</sup> Advancing from Fort Ridgley the second time, long before sufficiently provided for, Colonel Sibley, having crossed the Minnesota, dispatched a message to Adjutant General Malmros, September 13, 1862, stating that he has "*but twenty-five mounted men,*" and begging for "*at least two hundred cavalry.*" His whole force is "*1,500 men, and although the cartridges have arrived, with ninety men of the Ninth regiment, yet the clothing train and the provision train are still behind.*" The same day he sends a messenger to the half-breeds and Sioux Indians in Little Crow's camp "*who have not been guilty of the murders and outrages of the massacre, to withdraw from those guilty people, and send a flag of truce when the troops are in sight.*"<sup>2</sup> September 15th, he writes to Colonel Flandrau, guarding the southwestern frontier, "*I am sadly crippled for want of ammunition and rations and clothing, but can wait no longer. I have no mounted force except twenty-five men, and the Indians are concentrating at, or near, Lac qui Parle. The lack of mounted men will tell badly on the results of the expedition. I send you what I can spare of my ammunition.*"<sup>3</sup> September 16th, Major General Pope, now in command of the new "Military Department of the Northwest," requests the governors of Iowa and Wisconsin to forward at once "*three or four regiments*" to St. Paul, and orders "*the purchase of 2,500 horses to push out against the Sioux.*"<sup>4</sup> This shows General Pope's view of the situation. September 17th, he congratulates Colonel Sibley on his advance amid discouragements so great, promising, faithfully, "*to send four regiments and 1,000 men as rapidly as possible,*" and, besides, "*to place*

1. It was only natural that some of the suffering captives, six weeks in the tepees of Little Crow's camp, should complain that they were not sooner released. Agony makes months out of moments and years out of days. But the reproaches against Colonel Sibley found in Mrs. Sarah Wakefield's "Six Weeks in Little Crow's Camp," pp. 48-53, are wholly unjustified. Let the unmerited and extreme sufferings of the captives be sufficient apology for the groundless accusations of indifference and unnecessary delay. The public press, however, and the party politicians, envious of Colonel Sibley's possible success, had no such apology.

2 Rebellion Record, Vol. XIII, pp. 631, 632.

3 Ibid., 633.

4 Ibid., pp. 649, 650, 652.



500 cavalry at Abercrombie, 500 at Otter Tail, 1,000 at Ridgley, and 500 at Crystal Lake between the Winnebagoes and the Sioux," and also to send Colonel Sibley "*forage for 1,000 horses and rations for 2,500 men.*"<sup>1</sup>

Great promises were these, and efficient also, had they only been performable! Colonel Sibley replies, September 19th, that he needs "*cavalry at once, hard bread, pork, and blankets for the troops,*" adding "*I have no time to write more, as I must immediately go in search of Little Crow.*" He has "*only ten days' rations and no supply nearer than St. Peter, fifty miles distant. The Seventh regiment are without overcoats. Yet I shall do all in my power to bring the expedition to a successful issue.*" General Pope now writes to Secretary Stanton, war secretary at Washington, "*There are neither troops nor arms sufficient in the state, and the governor calls on me for both. I am doing all I can and have but little to do it with,*" and Stanton replies, "*I would be glad to carry out your plans, but the critical state of affairs in Kentucky requires every man to be on the ground there, who is not absolutely needed elsewhere. Do not detain in your department more troops than absolutely necessary. Send the rest forward immediately to General Wright.*"<sup>2</sup> Such were the pressure and distress of the times, owing to the Civil War,—the "stay-at-homes" howling at Sibley for "not advancing faster!" September 22d, Colonel Sibley writes that the action with Little Crow is imminent. September 23d, *the day of the battle of Wood Lake*, General Pope writes to Major General Halleck, at Washington, "*You do not seem to be aware of the extent of the Indian outbreaks. The Sioux, 2,600 warriors, are assembled at the Upper Agency to give battle to Colonel Sibley, who is advancing with 1,600 men and five pieces of artillery. Three hundred men, women, and children are now in captivity. Cannot the paroled officers and men of the rifle regiment (Dragoons) now in Michigan be sent here?*"<sup>3</sup> Such the crisis and impotency, in that solemn moment of the history of the nation strained to its utmost, everywhere. Such that most critical epoch in the life of Minnesota, the Indians rising with serpentine cunning all around her, Colonel Sibley struggling like Laocöon in the anaconda's folds, to liberate the state, the captives, and himself, from the red man's deadly coil! voices still shouting "*On to Richmond!*" "*On to Little Crow!*"

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 649, 650, 652.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 668.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 668.

Colonel Sibley's policy was a masterly one, urging reinforcements and supplies, while yet compelled to reinforce and supply others. On the twelfth of September, through his intercessions, there were in the State of Minnesota, at different points, 5,500 troops of all kinds, of which 2,721 were regulars, 400 cavalry, and yet but 1,500 or 1,600 of these, with only 25 mounted men, had been assigned to the commander of the chief expedition!<sup>1</sup> The main body of the enemy concentrated on his front. What better rule than that of old and wise commanders could be adopted, "*Divide et impera*," a result effected most triumphantly by Colonel Sibley's correspondence with Little Crow, and a friendly element in Little Crow's camp! It was during the so-called delay,—which was no delay,—between the third and twenty-third of September, that Little Crow and his bands were given to understand the terms on which Colonel Sibley would consent to treat, viz., *unconditional surrender of the captives*, or *unconditional extermination*! And yet a disposition to extend mercy to those innocent of the outrages connected with the massacre was as plainly intimated as the determination to punish those guilty of the same. By the one proposition fear was engendered. By the other hope was inspired. By both division was made, and dissension kindled in the enemy's camp. No less than four different councils were convoked, the Upper Indians arrayed, in a measure, against the Lower, and also quarreling among themselves, Little Paul, Red Iron, Standing Buffalo, and one hundred Sissetons, determined to fight Little Crow himself should any attempt be made to massacre the captives or place them in front of the coming battle, and ready to sue for peace on such terms as Colonel Sibley might grant. It was half the victory. The hostiles began to feel that judgment was near, their doom no longer slumbering. It compelled Little Crow, already tortured with fear, to fortify his braves with self-conflicting falsehoods and arts, assuring them that 3,000 British were ready to help, that Sibley's troops were "a pack of old men and boys," to shoot whom was a waste of ammunition, but to tomahawk and scalp them a trivial, easy, morning diversion. The bridges set on fire to impede his advance; the constant scouting and as constant retreating; the suggestion of ambuscade; the taunts of the

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Docs., 1862, p. 27.

Upper against the Lower Sioux as cowards not daring to fight; the little bundles of painted sticks, eight hundred or more in number, left on Prescott's grave, to inform the whites what force they must meet; the defiant bravado stuck on the fence near Redwood river, "Come on, we're ready for you;" the price set on Sibley's head, eighteen young Indians detailed to take his life, only betrayed the fact that Little Crow was even then the victim of apprehension, watching and waiting to make one desperate last resistance, and win or lose all in one final engagement.

When the sun was low, September 22, 1862, Colonel Sibley's entire command encamped on the high prairies near Wood Lake, three miles from the ford of the Yellow Medicine. Within striking distance were also encamped from 800 to 1,000 warriors, Medawakantons and Wahpekutas of the Lower, and Wahpetons and Sissetons of the Upper, Sioux, including certain Winnebagoes, half-breeds, and deserters from the Renville Rangers.<sup>1</sup> On the morning of September 23d, at half-past seven o'clock, the Indians suddenly attacked a foraging party of teamsters, half a mile distant from Colonel Sibley's camp. The guards returned the fire. This precipitated the decisive battle of Wood Lake, where the power of Little Crow was broken. The Third regiment, Major Welch, without orders, and impatient for the fray, formed in line, and, crossing the ravine, engaged the foe, only escaping annihilation by the quick order of Colonel Sibley calling them back, the Indians almost surrounding them. The Renville Rangers, under Lieutenant Gorman, were ordered to advance, and thrown forward to check the assault, the Third regiment supporting them, and fighting valiantly a hand-to-hand contest with the red man. Captain Hendricks of the artillery, under the immediate supervision of Colonel Sibley, placed his guns at the head of the ravine, and worked them with destructive effect. The battle raged furiously for two hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Rough guesses at the number of Indian warriors, concentrated for the battle of Wood Lake, have been reported officially and become a matter of record, which, however, more accurate information showed to be underestimates. See *Rebellion Record*, Vol. XIII, p. 745. "The Indians were 780."—*Dakota War-Whoop*, p. 219. "Indians to the number of eight hundred, well armed."—Adjutant General's Report, Executive Documents, 1862. "The number actually engaged on each side was about eight hundred."—*Heard's Sioux War*, p. 175. The number of "painted sticks," actually counted, gives an approximate estimate, but not necessarily perfect. Major General Pope, in his dispatch to Halleck, September 23d, says they were "2,000 warriors," Colonel Sibley's force being "1,600 men and five pieces of artillery."

Unable to pierce the lines in front, Little Crow attempted a flank movement on the right, in the ravine. Colonel Marshall was then ordered to charge with the Seventh regiment and part of the Sixth, and drive the Indians from their position. The charge was executed in the most brilliant manner, on a double quick, in the face of incessant volleys from the Indian rifles, which fortunately went, for the most part, over the heads of the regiments, and the Indians were routed precipitately, at the point of the bayonet. A similar flank movement on the left was also disappointed by the successful advance and action of the Sixth regiment, under Major McLaren and Captain Wilson. The staff officers of Colonel Sibley rendered prompt and efficient service everywhere, carrying their orders with alacrity and regardless of danger. The friendly Indian "Other-Day" was a hero, bounding like a tiger, with teeth set, into the thickest of the fight, his face radiant with joy, and bearing, as it were, a charmed life. "He was a warrior worthy to have crossed cimeters with Saladin or dashed with Arabia's mad prophet through the shock of Eastern war."<sup>1</sup> Simon, another friendly Indian, a spy of Colonel Sibley, rushed with rare daring into the heart of Little Crow's forces, unscathed, and informed his friendly kinsmen, there, what to do. The conflict was severe. At length the Indians, unable to endure the murderous fire, broke, and retreated in haste, bearing off many of their wounded. The casualties of the white troops were fifty-four killed and wounded, the Indian loss being vastly greater. A large portion of Colonel Sibley's force was held in reserve, and also guarding the camp. The smallness of his loss was also due to his purpose to make it so, dealing a prompt and effective stroke at the outset, which spared the greater bloodshed and mortality that otherwise would have attended a more doubtful and less vigorous action. The Upper Indians, as soon as they saw the battle was going against Little Crow, abandoned the Lower Indians to their fate, and "skedaddled"<sup>2</sup> from the field.

Had the cavalry force under Colonel Sibley been effective, a second campaign, the following year, had not been necessary. Neither the state nor the general government provided it. Three hundred mounted men had sufficed to pursue and de-

<sup>1</sup> Heard's Sioux War, pp. 175, 176.

<sup>2</sup> The word "skedaddled" is classic, and found in the epitaph of the heroes who fell at Platea, describing the effect of their valor on the foe. It comes from the Greek "skedannumi."

stroy every one of Little Crow's miscreant bands. As it was, however, the battle of Wood Lake, fought before any help from Stanton, Halleck, or Pope, arrived, was decisive and conclusive of the Sioux War. It was fought by Minnesotians alone. Its importance and timeliness to the state were inestimable. If the engagement at Birch Coolie saved Mankato and St. Peter, the engagement at Wood Lake saved the State of Minnesota. It broke the prestige of Little Crow and dissolved the combination of Indian tribes ready, should he succeed, to renew, in appalling, widespread horror, the massacre he had initiated August 18, 1862. It made Standing Buffalo and the Upper Sissetons the enemies of Little Crow. It released troops to go to the seat of war in the South. It brought peace, joy, happiness, and protection, to the hearts and homes of Minnesota. It stopped the "howlers at St. Paul," brought to its dying cadences the cry of "*On to Little Crow!*" and, with the gratitude of a nation and a state, secured that merited promotion which transferred Colonel Sibley from the rank of a state military officer, under its executive, to the rank of an officer in the United States Army, commissioned as a brigadier general, in token of his gallant conduct in the field, a step to still higher military honor by brevet. Appropriate, as beautiful, are the words of Colonel Sibley to his anxious wife:

"WOOD LAKE (forty-five miles above Fort Ridgley), September 23d.—Thanks to a kind Providence, I have passed, this day, through a sharp battle without injury, although the balls flew thick and fast around us. A large force of savages attacked us this morning, and, after a desperate fight of two hours, we whipped them handsomely. We have inflicted so severe a blow upon them that they will not dare make another stand. They sent in a flag of truce, offering to surrender if I would promise them immunity from punishment, and allow them to carry off their dead, both which conditions were peremptorily refused. Now be of good cheer, and trust in God that we shall soon be reunited. I am sending down a train for provisions, of which we are greatly in need."

After this decisive battle, Little Crow fell back to a point near what afterward became "*Camp Release*," and remained there till hearing of the advance of Colonel Sibley. On the evening of the battle a flag of truce was sent to Colonel Sibley offering, as above stated, entire surrender of the Indian forces upon the conditions of immunity from punishment and permission to carry off their dead, both which were peremptorily refused. On the twenty-fourth, Ma-za-ku-ta-ma-ne, Ta-o-pee, Wa-ke-wa-na, Ma-za-mo-ni, and Aki-pa sent messages to Colo-

nel Sibley, from Red Iron's village, advising him of the situation. Colonel Sibley's staff officers, urging him to make a night march upon the Indians and capture their camp, he declined their proposition, after listening respectfully to their reasons, assuring them that, did they but know the Indian character as well as he did, their proposition could have found no place in their mind. The savages had mounted scouts watching him, and in case of a movement under cover of darkness, the fact would be communicated to Little Crow at once, and the warriors would put to death, if possible, all the female captives, disperse to the prairies, and, no cavalry force being with him, he would fail to take a solitary prisoner. He proposed another plan to himself which he carried out successfully. After burying the dead and caring for the wounded, Colonel Sibley broke up his encampment, and, on the morning of the twenty-fifth, crossed the Yellow Medicine river, and, marching five miles, bivouacked on the open prairie, September 26, 1862, at the spot subsequently known as "*Camp Release*," having previously dispatched a message to the friendly Indians apprising them of his intention to reach them the next day. Little Crow, despairing of success, had fled with some two hundred of the hostiles toward the Yankton Sioux on the James river, leaving behind him the rest of his bands, the captives, the friendly element, and the Renville Ranger deserters, all in his camp, surrounded by rifle pits and some small fortifications. In this camp were one hundred and fifty lodges, by this time, of friendly Indians, all the rest finding it their best policy now to play the "*Good Injun*," affecting horror at the outrages of the massacre.

Determined not to be deceived by flags of truce, or Indian cunning, Colonel Sibley pitched his own camp "within five hundred yards" of the Indian camp, covering it with his guns.<sup>1</sup> His program was carried out successfully, according to arrangement with the friendly element, the white rag hoisted at one side of the Indian camp where the captives were gathered, so that, in case of resistance, he might know where to direct his fire.

Accordingly, at about 2 P. M., September 26, 1862, Colonel Sibley, against the remonstrance of his staff, who feared treachery and the possible loss of their loved commander, accompanied by a few officers and two companies of infantry,

<sup>1</sup> Rebellion Record, Vol XIII, p. 679.



proceeded straight to the Indian encampment, drums beating and colors flying. Leaving the soldiers outside, he entered the camp, with an air of sovereignty and military supremacy, as if he owned the universe. It was a historic moment. In his own impressive words:

"I entered, with my officers, to the centre of the circle formed by the numerous lodges, and seeing the old savage whom I knew personally as the individual with stentorian lungs, who promulgated the orders of the chiefs and head men to the multitude, I beckoned him to me, and, in a peremptory tone, ordered him to go through the camp and notify the tenants that I demanded all the female captives to be brought to me *instantly*. And now was presented a scene which no one who witnessed it can ever forget. From the lodges there issued more than one hundred comely young girls and women, most of whom were so scantily clad as scarcely to conceal their nakedness. On the persons of some hung but a single garment, while pitying half-breeds and Indian women had provided others with scraps of clothing from their own little wardrobes, answering, indeed, a mere temporary purpose. But a worse accoutered, or more distressed, group of civilized beings imagination would fail to picture. Some seemed stolid, as if their minds had been strained to madness and reaction had brought vacant gloom, indifference, and despair. They gazed with a sad stare. Others acted differently. The great body of the poor creatures rushed wildly to the spot where I was standing with my brave officers, pressing as close to us as possible, grasping our hands and clinging to our limbs, as if fearful that the red devils might yet reclaim their victims. I did all I could to reassure them, by telling them they were now to be released from their horrible sufferings and freed from their bondage. Many were hysterical, bordering on convulsions, laughter and tears commingling, incredulous that they were in the hands of their preservers. A few of the more attractive had been offered the alternative of becoming the temporary wives of select warriors, and so, helpless and powerless, yet escaped the promiscuous attentions of a horde of savages bent on brutal insult revolting to conceive, and impossible to be described. The majority of these outraged girls and young women were of a superior class. Some were school teachers, who, accompanied by their girl pupils, had gone to pass their summer vacation with relatives or friends in the border counties of the state. The settlers, both native and foreign, were, for the most part, respectable, prosperous, and educated citizens whose wives and daughters had been afforded the privileges of a good common school education. Such were the delicate young girls and women who had been subjected for weeks to the inhuman embraces of hundreds of filthy savages, utterly devoid of all compassion for the sufferers. Escorting the captives to the outside of the camp, they were placed under the protection of the troops and taken to our own encampment, where I had ordered tents to be pitched for their accommodation. Officers and men, affected even to tears by the scene, denuded themselves of their entire underclothing, blankets, coats, and whatever they could give, or could be converted into raiment for these heart-broken and abused victims of savage lust and rage. The only white man found alive when we reached the Indian encampment was George H.



Spencer, who was saved from death by the heroic devotion of his Indian comrade, but yet badly wounded. He said to me, *'It is God's mercy, that you did not march here on the night after the battle. A plan was formed, had you done so, to murder the captives, then scatter to the prairies,'*—thus verifying my prediction of the course they would pursue. *I bless God for the wisdom he gave me, and whereby, with the aid of my brave men, in spite of all slander and abuse, I was enabled to win a victory so decisive, and redeem from their thralldom those unfortunate sufferers who were a burden on my heart from the first moment of my campaign.'*<sup>1</sup>

In his official reports of the battle of Wood Lake, and the release of the captives, first to Governor Ramsey, and next to Major General Pope, Colonel Sibley praises in the highest terms the gallantry of his troops, and especially that of the dashing Lieutenant Colonel Wm. R. Marshall.

There are scenes of thrilling character in history, when, after the painful travail of captivity, and weary, wakeful, almost hopeless watching, the long dark night of weeping, suffering, and bondage, breaks into the burst of a splendid sunrise, and the birth of a new life, pulsating with the wild throb of deliverance, and souls made free are delirious with joy. In the body, or out of the body, at such a time, none can tell. To shout at such a time, to sing, to weep, to laugh, is a relief! It seems like a dream! Tears, smiles, and embraces, from swelling hearts of gratitude and love, all flow together, deliverer and delivered rejoicing in the same glad jubilee. When, under the sword and edict of Cyrus, Judah's captivity was turned, and exiles who had wept by Babel's streams returned to their homes, all seemed a dream. "When the Lord turned our captivity we were like them that dreamed. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Thrilling was the scene when the Crusaders, under Godfrey, neared the Holy City, and, catching the first sight of their long expectation, rose in their wagons, children on their mother's shoulders, shouting "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" Thrilling the scene when the Greeks under Xenophon, in the celebrated retreat of the 10,000, first caught a glimpse of the great wide-spreading sea with its heaving billows, and, mounting on each other's shoulders, exclaimed "The Sea! The Sea!" Thrilling the time of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox, the wild shout of the nation, and the

<sup>1</sup> Private Notes of Colonel Sibley on the Indian War of 1862. See, also, Rebellion Record, Vol. XIII, p. 680.

cry of "Victory! Victory!" guns thundering, wires shooting, white sails and steamers speeding, the news to every nation under heaven. And unutterably thrilling that crowning day when the Union armies, radiant in triumph, and returning to their homes, marched before the capitol in Washington, music sounding, flags flying, the wild multitude waving hallelujahs to them, cheers ringing to the welkin, as their proud steps bore the pageant—not twice seen in a century—to its close. Those are scenes not to be forgotten by any who beheld them. But not more deeply graven in the memory were such events than was the scene at *Camp Release*, September 26, 1862, graven in the hearts of those who witnessed it, cut "as with an iron pen and in a rock, forever;"—that once-occurring scene when those sad delivered captives, the long-abused victims of concupiscence and cruelty, followed, in ragged and irregular procession, their deliverer, Colonel Henry Hastings Sibley, and torn, tattered, weeping, smiling, wondering, naked, hoping, and rejoicing, were conducted to his camp, free, forever, from their loathsome bondage. What emotions struggled for expression in the breast of Colonel Sibley, what in the breasts of the delivered ones, only he and they knew to whom the anguish and the joy were mutual. Outside of these, God only is a partner in such mysteries. Colonel Sibley's proudest, noblest title is not "First Delegate from the Territory of Minnesota," not "First Governor of the State," not "Colonel Commanding the Indian Expedition," not "Brigadier General in the Army," nor "Brevet Major General," but this one word, "*Deliverer of Minnesota's Captives*" from the grasp of the red man, and who but for him had perished in their chains. If there is one spot upon the soil of Minnesota worthy to be consecrated as a Mecca for her sons, one acre on her breast on which a monument might tower, heaven-pointing and sky-piercing to the blue, it is that spot called "CAMP RELEASE," where Minnesota's "Ebenezer" should be raised in memory of God's mercy to the captives, and to the state, delivered by the faithful Sibley and his brave men, September 23 and September 26, 1862.

Two of the main objects of the expedition having been accomplished, viz., the defeat of the Sioux and release of the captives, the other two, viz., the punishment of the guilty and the driving of the Sioux from the state, remained yet to be realized. The third was effected through the arrest, imprison-

ment, and trial, by a military commission, of all Indians and half-breeds suspected of participating in the massacre and outrages that had happened anywhere in the state, the state concurring in the findings of the commission, the president of the United States nevertheless modifying the same. The fourth was achieved by the special legislation of Congress, and through the Indian campaign of the following year under General Sibley, General Sully co-operating. Previous to this, however, Colonel Sibley, faithful to his purpose, thrice formally applied to Governor Ramsey and Major General Pope to be relieved of his command, now that the campaign was practically ended, and the captives were released.<sup>1</sup> His request was refused. Considerations of public necessity forbade the loss of an officer whose services were so important to the country, and whose success had been so distinguished. All his staff and field officers earnestly and formally entreated him to withdraw his application, and also sent their written action immediately to Major General Pope.<sup>2</sup> The news of Colonel Sibley's victory at Wood Lake having reached the ears of the war department at Washington, its immense value not only to the State of Minnesota, but to the whole country, in the throes of civil war, being deeply appreciated, President Lincoln at once promoted him to the rank of "*Brigadier General*," thus transferring him from the rank of a state military officer, subject to the state executive, to the rank of a United States officer, subject to the jurisdiction of the president as commander-in-chief of the forces of the United States. The following telegram was sent to Major General Pope:

WASHINGTON, D. C., September 29, 1862.

*Major General Pope, St. Paul, Minnesota:*

Colonel Henry Hastings Sibley is made brigadier general for his judicious fight at Yellow Medicine. He should be kept in command of that column, and every possible assistance sent to him.

H. W. HALLECK,  
*General-in-Chief.*<sup>3</sup>

This honor, subsequently confirmed by the senate of the United States, was accepted by Colonel Sibley, and, at the urgent solicitation of the government, General Sibley remained at his post, notwithstanding much loss to his private interests. September 28, 1862, before he became a United

<sup>1</sup> Rebellion Record, Vol. XIII, pp. 680, 687, 694.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 720.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 688.

States officer, he organized a military commission composed of Colonel Crooks, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, Captains Grant and Bailey, and Lieutenant Olin, the Rev. Dr. Riggs, chaplain and missionary for forty years, among the Sioux, acting as the medium of communication between the injured captive women and the commission, Lieutenant Isaac V. D. Heard acting as recorder and Antoine Frere as general interpreter, to "try, *summarily*, the mulatto, mixed-bloods, and Indians engaged in the Sioux raids and massacres."<sup>1</sup> The following is the official order:

SPECIAL ORDER, No. 55.

HEADQUARTERS, CAMP RELEASE,  
September 28, 1862.

A military commission composed of Colonel William Crooks of the Sixth regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall of the Seventh regiment, Captains Grant and Bailey of the Sixth regiment, and Lieutenant Olin of the Third regiment, will convene at some convenient place in camp at ten o'clock this morning, to try, *summarily*, the mulatto and Indians, or mixed-bloods, now prisoners, who may be brought before them by direction of the colonel commanding, and pass judgment upon them if found guilty of murder or other outrages upon the whites during the present state of hostilities; the proceedings of the commission to be returned to these headquarters immediately after their conclusion for the consideration of the colonel commanding. The commission will be governed in their proceedings by military laws and usages. Lieutenant Heard, adjutant Cullen Guards, will act as recorder to the military commission.

By order of Colonel H. H. Sibley, Commanding Military Expedition.

S. H. FOWLER,

*Lieutenant Colonel, S. M., A. A. Adjutant General.*

To this tribunal others were added afterward, as became necessary. The commission at once prepared to enter on its painful and laborious duties. No court calendar ever furnished an arraignment such as was here presented. By order of General Sibley, three hundred captives having been released and provided for, Colonel Crooks, a most accomplished officer, and president of the commission, quietly, with troops, surrounded the Indian camp, on the night of September 30th, and, disarming its inmates, arrested all warriors suspected of massacre and outrage, and marched them to the "log jail," already erected in the heart of Camp Release for their special accommodation. A similar movement was executed, at Yellow Medicine, by Captain Whitney, a faithful officer, to whom it was intrusted. No less than four hundred and twenty-five

<sup>1</sup> Heard's Sioux War, p. 251.

Indians and half-breeds, including the mulatto "Godfrey" who turned state's evidence against his compulsory masters, were enrolled for trial, upon the separate and specific charges of "robbery, rape, and murder." The commission sat from September 30 to November 5, 1862, when, having finished their unparalleled labors, they reported to General Sibley their judicial findings, to which he affixed his approval. Of the 425 arraigned for trial, 321 were found guilty of the offenses charged. Of these 303 were sentenced to death by the halter, the other 18 condemned to various terms of imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> Strict instructions were given by General Sibley that every man should enjoy a fair and impartial trial, be allowed the best possible defense, and that every reasonable doubt should go to the benefit of the accused. The trials were conducted, mainly, in the "court house of the military commission," in Camp Sibley, a log building, whose former owner fell in the massacre of August 18th, and whose location was within a stone's throw of the battle-field of Birch Coolie. The work of the commission finished, and the time for the troops to go into winter quarters having come, the camp was removed from the Lower Agency to Camp Lincoln, between Mankato and South Bend. Here, to await further orders from the United States Government, four hundred manacled Sioux, condemned and uncondemned, chained in pairs together, and crowded in wagons containing ten to twelve each, were conducted, under a military guard of 1,500 infantry and cavalry, by General Sibley in person. The procession was such as Minnesota had never seen. Reaching New Ulm, the people made an insane assault upon the prisoners, one woman, frenzied with rage, cleaving in twain, with a hatchet, the jaw of an Indian, another breaking a skull, the crowd, composed mostly of women, pelting with stones and bricks, till General Sibley, as a prudential measure, gave orders to pass the prisoners and troops around and outside of the town.

November 10, 1862, the names of the three hundred and three convicted Indians and half-breeds were forwarded to President Lincoln, by Major General Pope, accompanied by a complete record of the charges, specifications, and testimony in each case, to secure his approval of the sentence, and obtain the necessary order for the execution of each. At the same time, both Governor Ramsey and General Pope urged upon

<sup>1</sup> Rebellion Record, Vol. XIII, p. 757.

the president, in most decided terms, the instant and capital punishment of all the condemned, without exception.<sup>1</sup> Three days previously, November 7th, General Sibley had dispatched Lieutenant Colonel Marshall from Camp Release to Fort Snelling, with 1,800 captive Indians, mostly women and children, under a strong military escort, the whole train measuring four miles in length, and reaching its destination November 13th. The Indian camp, opposite Camp Release, had already been broken up, October 4, 1862, and the men not suspected of complicity with the massacres and outrages of August 18th had been sent to the agencies to gather in the winter crops. It was about this date General Pope offered the reward of five hundred dollars for the capture and delivery of Little Crow, "dead or alive," and sent to Major General Halleck, October 10, 1862, the welcome news, "The Sioux War is at an end."<sup>2</sup>

Of what transcendent importance the brave defenses of New Ulm and Fort Ridgley were, not only to the state but the nation, and how invaluable the victory at Birch Coolie, as also the repulses at Fort Abercrombie and Forest City about the same time, September 3, 1862, and, most of all, the crowning defeat of Little Crow at Wood Lake, September 23, 1862, may be learned from this, that during the progress of the trials evidence was found complete not only that "the whole Sioux Nation was involved in the war,"<sup>3</sup> but that the Southern Confederacy fixed its hope of success, in no small degree, upon "a general uprising of all the Indian tribes in the Northwest, about the month of September."<sup>4</sup> British medals were found in the hands of the Sioux. "Investigation showed that *secession* had sent its emissaries not only to the Dakotas but to all other tribes of the Northwest."<sup>5</sup> Only when it became known what was the force in General Sibley's camp did "Hole-in-the-Day," the Chippewa chief, befriend the state, and assist to make a new treaty of perpetual friendship with the whites, offering to war against Little Crow. Only when the battle of Wood Lake had been fought, and as a result the siege of Fort Abercrombie was raised, did the Winnebagoes, true to their cunning, and courting the white man's

1 Rebellion Record, Vol. XIII, pp. 787, 788; Heard's Sioux War, p. 267.

2 Ibid., p. 724.

3 Heard's Sioux War, p. 188.

4 Dakota War-Whoop, p. 290.

5 Ibid., p. 289.

favor, proclaim war against the Sioux. Prior to that, all the tribes in Wisconsin had sent their wampums to the Winnebago chief, and a council of war had been fixed for the twenty-eighth of September. Notice was sent from the South, in these words, "*The blow will be struck this summer.*" The Hon. H. M. Rice wrote from Washington that evidence existed to show that "*the Western tribes are going to join the South,*" that "*the Sioux raids are induced by rebels and traitors whose emissaries are sent to the Chippewas also,*" and that "*the greatest danger exists,*"<sup>1</sup> the Confederate Government urging the Indians to combine in a common cause against the United States. It was a critical moment for the country. Federal reverses had produced despondency. Confederate success had filled the nation with gloom. Lee was marching on Harper's Ferry, Stonewall Jackson entering Maryland, McDowell was arrested for treason, the star of McClellan was waning, Fitz John Porter was suspected, Cincinnati was under martial law, Kentucky invaded, and the writ of *habeas corpus* suspended. France had thrown 30,000 men into Mexico, and England's neutrality was but a mere cloak to prepare for a vigorous demonstration when the opportune moment of weakness in the United States should provide a sufficient pretext. Little Crow had dared to do more than Lord Palmerston. Every hour furnished new testimonials to the far-sighted wisdom of Colonel Sibley in refusing, at this juncture, to move without a sufficient force, and in keeping up secret correspondence with friends in Little Crow's camp. His determined demand for the captives, his appeal to the routed foe to "return and surrender" as the "only hope of mercy to any," all showed him to be a commander not less astute in diplomacy than consummate in tact and successful in arms. Lodges to the number of two hundred and fifty were gathered, or came in, until Little Crow was left, with but seventy men, to wander where he might, to find a home, evading Standing Buffalo's knife, or begging powder from British hands. The scouting and scouring of Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, so efficient and faithful, contributed largely to this consummation.

So ended the military expedition intrusted, by Governor Ramsey, to ex-Governor Sibley at Mendota. In the almost incredibly short period of one month and six days, from August 20th to September 26th, Colonel Sibley had organized

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Press, September 21, 1862.



the expedition in the midst of obstacles almost insurmountable, fed the perishing multitudes at St. Peter, sent reinforcements to Colonel Flandrau, relieved Fort Ridgley, fought the battles of Birch Coolie and Wood Lake, released 300 helpless captives, taken the whole Indian camp, and chained 425 warriors in irons. In one month and ten days more, from September 26th to November 10th, he had organized a military commission, tried the 425, convicted 321, sentenced to capital punishment 303, and to imprisonment 18, having captured in all over 2,200, sent 1,800 to Fort Snelling, besides conveying 425 to Camp Lincoln, and remanding to the spade and the hoe all able-bodied men not proved to be guilty of the crimes with which their fellow criminals were charged. During this period he had traveled three hundred miles, clogged by his military *impedimenta*, and on roads such as Nature alone provides, crossing rivers, camping on prairies, exposed to the violence of storms, sweltering under the noontide heat, or shivering with arctic cold, burdened by day, and sleepless at night. In the space of one month and twenty-one days from the date of his commission as colonel commanding the Indian expedition, *i. e.* from August 19th to October 10th, the whole campaign was terminated and its judicial results achieved, all eyes now directed to the general government, awaiting its formal sanction of what had been done. Major General Pope was enabled to dispatch the news to Washington, saying, "*The Sioux War is at an end.*"

This seems wonderful. It demands the recognition of a special Providence. Pontiac's War lasted six years. The Seminole War lasted seven years, in the Everglades of Florida, and cost the United States Government \$40,000,000. The Sioux War, more hideous in its inception than even King Philip's cruelties, lasted only one month and six days, at a cost to the government of less than \$250,000. It seems incredible, yet it is true. He who directed the footsteps of young Sibley to the Western wilds, trained him for fifteen years, to live the red man's life, and learn the red man's ways, baptizing him with names of mystic import, "*Hal a Dakotah*," and "*Walker-in-the-Pines*," meant mercy to a state even then unborn. That strange preparation, unconscious of its aim, was but a drill room, fitting for a crisis of the nation's peril and the state's calamity, when Colonel Sibley's experience, wisdom, and action should forestall an Indian combination

which, if unforestalled, might have blotted the new-born state from the Union, and changed the nation's destiny. Evermore, Providence has the right man for the right place. On the twenty-fifth day of November, 1862, by virtue of the removal of Major General Pope to Madison, Wisconsin, his new headquarters, General Sibley, notwithstanding all previous dispositions and arrangements, became general commanding the military district of Minnesota, General Pope commanding the remainder of the department of the Northwest.

The fate of the condemned is not without its tragic interest. Were they *all* worthy of death?<sup>1</sup> That question sprang into existence the moment the labors of the commission were ended. President Lincoln, as commander-in-chief of the United States forces, forbade the hanging of anyone convicted by a military commission, without his approval. While none in the State of Minnesota doubted the justice of the finding, opinion was divided outside of the state. The causes of this division were various. The feeling that the white man was deeply to blame, and that the policy of the government was largely responsible for the outbreak, the spectacular display of three hundred and three human beings dangling simultaneously from the same scaffold, the possibility that the work of the commission might need some revision, the false and mawkish sentimentalism of men opposed to capital punishment, the influence of the Quakers in the East importuning President Lincoln not to suffer such an execution, certain unsent apostles of the pulpit expounding that the hanging of ten guilty men might be justified but the hanging of three hundred, equally guilty, would be intolerable; these, and various other causes induced a delay on the part of Lincoln, such as to beget the impression, in the state, that executive clemency would finally disappoint the public expectation. From November 10th to December 6th passed away without any decision. It was a long list the president had to review, and serious work he had to do, and his business and his cares were already legion. With a solemn sense of his responsi-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Indians have not been without excuse for their evil deeds. Our own people have given them intoxicating drinks, taught them to swear, violated the rights of womanhood among them, robbed them of their dues and then insulted them. *What more* would be necessary to make one nation rise against another? *What more*, I ask? And yet how many curse this people and cry *Exterminate* them! *Dare* we, as a nation, thus bring a curse upon ourselves and future generations?"—"Forty Years Among the Sioux," by Rev. S. R. Riggs, D.D., LL.D., p. 178. Compare Neill's *Hist. of Minn.*, pp. 509, 510; Heard's *Hist. Sioux War*, Appendix, pp. 843-854; Bryant's *Indian Massacre*, pp. 82-88.

bility he considered every case by itself, read every Indian name, wrote it out, and marked the number of it, examining the charge, weighing the testimony, and pronouncing his deliberate judgment. How conscientiously this was done, those who knew him can imagine. Meanwhile the popular indignation and impatience of the state were aroused. Protests and appeals, by state senators and representatives, memorials from the valley towns, a petition from St. Paul signed by three hundred of her citizens, the influence of the public press, two hundred armed men marching to burst through the military guard at Camp Lincoln and commence another massacre of all the Indians under sentence, denunciation of the "Eastern sympathizers with red-handed miscreants such as the Puritans themselves had butchered, burned, scalped, and sold to slavery for their crimes," recital of the "sufferings the infant colonies had borne," the "justice of *lex talionis*," and the divine decree that "whoso sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed," all this, crowned with the faultless sentiment, "*Let law be executed and let justice have its course*," was brought to bear upon the president. General Sibley, though mainly in accord with the popular sentiment, yet issued an effective military order for the arrest of all persons conspiring to invade the camp, or, by unlawful means, take vengeance into their own hands; an order promptly executed by Colonel Stephen Miller of the Seventh regiment, commanding the post at Mankato. How critical the situation was will be seen in the following military dispatches between Generals Sibley, Elliott, Halleck, and President Lincoln:

## HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,

ST. PAUL, December 6, 1862.

*Brigadier General Elliott, Commanding Department:*

About eleven o'clock on the night of the fourth instant, the guard around the Indian prisoners at Camp Lincoln were assaulted by nearly two hundred men, who attempted to reach the prisoners, with the avowed intention of murdering the condemned prisoners. Colonel Miller, commanding, warned previously of the design, surrounded the assailants and took them prisoners, but subsequently released them. Colonel Miller informs me that large numbers of citizens are assembling, and he fears a serious collision. I have authorized him to declare martial law, if necessary, and call to his assistance all the troops within his reach. He thinks it will require 1,000 true men to protect the prisoners against all organized popular outbreak. He will have nearly or quite that number, but it is doubtful if they can be relied on in the last resort.

Please telegraph the facts to the president, and ask instructions. Any hour may witness a sad conflict, if it has not already occurred.

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MADISON, WIS., December 6, 1862.

*Major General H. W. Halleck, Washington, D. C.:*

General Sibley reports that, on the fourth, the guard around the Indian prisoners at South Bend were assaulted by about two hundred citizens with intent to murder the Indians. The citizens were taken prisoners, but subsequently released; that a large number of citizens are assembling, and a serious collision is feared. I have ordered strong re-enforcements to the guard over the prisoners.

W. L. ELLIOTT,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

ST. PAUL, December 8, 1862.

*Brigadier General Elliott, Commanding Department:*

Dispatches and private letters just received indicate a fearful collision between the United States forces and the citizens. Combinations, embracing thousands of men in all parts of the state, are said to be forming, and in a few days our troops, with the Indian prisoners, will be literally besieged. I shall concentrate all the men I can at Mankato. But should the president pardon the condemned Indians, there will be a determined effort to get them in possession, which will be resented, and may cost the lives of thousands of our citizens. Ask the president to keep secret his decision, whatever it may be, until I have prepared myself as best I can. God knows how much the excitement is increasing and extending. Telegraph without delay to headquarters.

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MADISON, WIS., December 9, 1862.

*Major General H. W. Halleck, Washington, D. C.:*

General Sibley reports that combinations, embracing thousands in all parts of Minnesota, are forming to get the condemned Indians in their possession. I ask that the action of the president may be kept secret until we can concentrate the troops, to prevent a collision, if possible.

W. L. ELLIOTT,  
*Brigadier General United States Volunteers, Commanding.*

All proper diligence and every possible precaution were used to prevent the gathering of the rising storm of popular violence, and the outburst of pent-up revenge. A proclamation by Governor Ramsey to the people as "good citizens," not to wreck, by acts of lawlessness, the public order, but "await the decision of the overburdened president," was productive also of the best results.

The decision came at last. Contrary to the expectation of the people, the president signed the death sentences of but forty of those condemned by the commission, approving only the execution of such persons as the testimony showed had been "guilty of individual murders and atrocious abuse of their female captives." Of these, Otakla, *alias* Godfrey, was allowed a commutation of sentence to ten years' imprisonment. Tah-te-mi-na, or Round Wind, of whose guilt some lingering doubt remained, as, also, in view of what his noble relative, John Other-Day, "had done in behalf of the whites," was reprieved by the president. The number to be executed was thus reduced to thirty-eight.

The following is a copy of the officially certified order of President Lincoln to General H. H. Sibley, December 6, 1862, and a copy also of the "Special Order, No. 59," based upon it, by General Sibley, to Colonel Stephen Miller, December 15, 1862, to carry the order of the president into effect, on Friday, December 19, 1862.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, December 6, 1862.

*Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, St. Paul, Minnesota:*

Ordered that, of the Indians and half-breeds sentenced to be hanged by the military commission, composed of Colonel Crooks, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, Captain Grant, Captain Bailey, and Lieutenant Olin, and lately sitting in Minnesota, you cause to be executed on Friday, the nineteenth day of December instant, the following named, to-wit:

"Te-he-hdo-ne-cha," No. 2 by the record.

"Tazoo" alias "Plan-doo-ta," No. 4 by the record.

"Wy-a-tah-to-wah," No. 5 by the record.

"Hin-han-shoon-ko-yaz," No. 6 by the record.

"Muz-za-bom-a-du," No. 10 by the record.

"Wah-pay-du-ta," No. 11 by the record.

"Wa-he-hua," No. 12 by the record.

"Sna-ma-ni," No. 14 by the record.

"Tah-te-mi-na," No. 15 by the record.

"Rda-in-yan-kna," No. 19 by the record.

"Do-wan-sa," No. 22 by the record.

"Ha-pan," No. 24 by the record.

"Shan-ka-ska" (White Dog), No. 35 by the record.

"Toon-kan-e-chah-tay-manee," No. 67 by the record.

"E-tay-hoo-tay," No. 68 by the record.

"Am-da-cha," No. 69 by the record.

"Hay-pee-don" or "Wamne-omne-ho-ta," No. 70 by the record.

"Mehpe-o-ke-na-ji," No. 96 by the record.

"Henry Milord," a half-breed, No. 115 by the record.

- "Chas-kay-don" or "Chaskay-etay," No. 121 by the record.  
 "Baptiste Campbell," a half-breed, No. 138 by the record.  
 "Tab-ta-kay-zay," No. 155 by the record.  
 "Ha-pink-pa," No. 170 by the record.  
 "Hypolite Auge," a half-breed, No. 175 by the record.  
 "Wa-pay-shne," No. 178 by the record.  
 "Wa-kan-tan-ka," No. 210 by the record.  
 "Toon-kan-ka-yag-e-na-jin," No. 225 by the record.  
 "Ma-kat-e-na-jin," No. 254 by the record.  
 "Pa-zee-koo-tay-ma-ne," No. 264 by the record.  
 "Ta-tay-hde-don," No. 279 by the record.  
 "Wa-she-choon" or "Toon-kan-shkan-shkan-mene-hay," No. 318  
 by the record.  
 "A-e-cha-ga," No. 327 by the record.  
 "Ha-tan-in-koo," No. 333 by the record.  
 "Chay-ton-hoon-ka," No. 342 by the record.  
 "Chan-ka-hda," No. 359 by the record.  
 "Hda-hin-hday," No. 373 by the record.  
 "Oh-ya-tay-a-koo," No. 377 by the record.  
 "May-hoo-way-wa," No. 382 by the record.  
 "Wa-kin-yan-na," No. 383 by the record.

The other condemned prisoners you will hold subject to further orders, taking care that they neither escape, nor are subjected to any unlawful violence.

(Signed,) ABRAHAM LINCOLN,  
*President of the United States.*

HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
 ST. PAUL, MINN., December 13, 1862.

[SPECIAL ORDER, No. 59.]

The order of the president of the United States, of which the foregoing is a true copy, will be carried into full effect on the day prescribed, that is to say, on Friday, the nineteenth day of the present month, by Colonel Stephen Miller, commanding at Mankato, at such hour and place as he may appoint.

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

ST. PAUL, MINN., April 17, 1876.

I hereby certify that the foregoing copies of orders for the execution of the Sioux Indians concerned in the outbreak of 1862, are true transcripts of the originals, which have been donated to the Minnesota Historical Society.

H. H. SIBLEY.

In response to "Special Order, No. 59," Colonel Miller communicated with General Sibley. The time between the seventeenth and nineteenth was too limited to sufficiently

prepare for the execution. General Sibley instantly telegraphed to President Lincoln, who replied to the telegram, fixing the time for the execution at the general's suggestion, and which was consequently fixed for a week later.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, December 16, 1862.

*Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, St. Paul, Minn.:*

As you suggest, let the execution fixed for Friday, the nineteenth instant, be postponed to, and be done on, Friday, the twenty-sixth instant.

A. LINCOLN.

OPERATOR—Please send this very carefully and accurately.

In obedience to this arrangement, Colonel Miller, under date of December 17, 1862, announced that Friday, December 26, 1862, at half-past ten o'clock of the forenoon, the execution would take place at Mankato.

The awful day was approaching, rapid as the fates could spin and cut off their threads. Monday, December 22, the condemned were removed from the log jail to a separate room in a stone building adjoining, and given the spiritual counsel of Dr. Williamson and Father Ravoux. Tuesday, the twenty-third, having parted from friends who came to see them, they improvised a war-dance, during which they chanted their death-song. Wednesday, the twenty-fourth, each man was allowed to take leave of his relatives. The scenes were sad and affecting, as they spoke of their wives and children whose wrongs they had only avenged. Many wept big tears as they alluded to the wigwam bereaved of its joy, and took their last leave of the homes and land of their sires, torn from their grasp by the white man's hand. Thursday, the twenty-fifth, the women are admitted. Locketts of hair, blankets, and beads, coats, pipes, and trinkets of all kinds, are bequeathed as dying gifts, and mementoes of human affection. One message is sent to all their friends. It is not to mourn their loss. Ta-zoo or Red Otter, affects to joke. Tah-te-mi-na, or Round Wind, yet unreprieved, is baptized. Tip-of-the-Horn hopes the "Great Wakan" will save him. Walker-clad-in-the-Owl's-Tail has nothing to say. Many profess themselves penitent and look to Christ for the pardon of sin. It seems as if a door of hope had been opened to some of these poor Dakota Gentiles, by the pious labors of Dr. Williamson and Father Ravoux, who taught them to say:



*"Jesus Christ, nitowashti kin,  
Woptecashna mayagu.  
Jesus Christ, thy loving kindness  
Boundlessly thou gavest me."*

Later at night they are chained to the floor, some singing, some smoking, some sleeping. They appear contented and cheerful.

Black Friday, December 26, 1862, only two days previous to the day the Indians had agreed upon for a general council of war, has come. Martial law has been proclaimed. The saloons are closed. The hotels are crowded. At dawn of the day, their friends having entered, they tell them they wish to die happy, not sadly, but bravely, like true Dakotas. They are anxious, however, to look well as they march to the expiation. Their eagle-plumes, and feathers of the owl's tail, are adjusted with care, and their faces retouched, in artistic mode, with vermilion and ultramarine. They shake hands with the officers, bid them good bye, and perform together, with plaintive wail, the sad music of the Indian death-song. At 7:30 A. M. they are pinioned. The death-song is again sung. Father Ravoux, in the Dakota tongue, devoutly commends them to the mercy of God. Some solemnly respond to his prayer, others sob loudly. Hot tears fall heavily to the ground. A last word is spoken. They look into their little pocket mirrors to see if the feathers and the paint are all right. Their toilet is perfect.

At ten o'clock precisely, they move to the scaffold, through files of soldiers, and are delivered by Captain Redfield to Captain Burt, the officer of the day. Again the death-song is sung as they ascend the platform soon to slip from their feet. This time, however, it is mingled with the hideous "*Hi-yi-yi*," even after the caps were drawn over their faces. The noose is adjusted to each. Cut Nose, a brute to the last, commits a nameless insult. All is ready. The supreme moment has come. The scaffold stands in the midst of the troops, who are formed in a hollow square near the river front. From its beams thirty-eight ropes are suspended, now fastened to thirty-eight necks. It is winter, and wet and cold, yet every street and house and hotel, door, window, and eligible spot, is crowded. The poor wretches try to clasp hands, some succeeding,—they stand so closely together,—the grasp unrelaxed even in death. Three low beats of the drum by Major Brown, slow, steady, measured, dismal, and funereal. *One,—*

*Two,—Three!* and the rope of the platform is cut by Mr. Duley of Lake Shetek, whose wife and two children had been captured, and three children killed. The scaffold floor falls, and thirty-eight bodies, spasmodic in agony, writhe and twist and turn and whirl on their halts. A universal cheer goes up from citizens and soldiers alike, protracted, repeated, yet somewhat subdued, blood-curdling, horrific. The dying hear it. Retribution has come. Justice alone, in that hour of excitement, retains her composure and looks on the scene with a face undisturbed and calm. On every side is a jubilee, and the Angel of Judgment seems to intone the solemn "*Amen!*" Tragic end, not less tragic than the massacre itself! The bodies of the culprits are cut down when life is extinct, piled into four army wagons and borne, by a burial party under Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, to a sandbank in the Minnesota river, where, in a common ditch, thirty feet long, twelve wide, in double rows, first blankets, then earth thrown upon them, their uncoffined remains are sunk out of sight.<sup>1</sup> What became of them, immediately afterward, the medical profession can, perhaps, best inform the world! All that remained to be done now, so far as this sad affair was concerned, was to report to the president the fulfillment of his order, which General Sibley did in the following telegram:

ST. PAUL, MINN., December 27, 1862.

*The President of the United States:*

I have the honor to inform you that the thirty-eight Indians and half-breeds, ordered by you for execution, were hung yesterday at Mankato, at 10 A. M. Everything went off quietly, and the other prisoners are well secured.

Respectfully,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General.*

Throughout this trying ordeal, as in the field itself, and camp, the staff and field officers of General Sibley won for themselves the highest praise. Colonel Crooks, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, Colonel Miller, Colonel McPhail, Captain Whitney, Major Brown, Major McLaren, like others, were gentlemen of pure character, accomplished, brave, and faithful to the state. For the hardships they endured, the invaluable services they rendered, and the deliverance they wrought, with the troops at their command, the state can never make a sufficient testimonial of its gratitude.

<sup>1</sup> For a full description of the scene, see St. Paul Daily Press, September 28, 1862, and the Pioneer and Democrat, same date.

To assist, as far as possible, the completion of the fourth great object sought by General Sibley in his Indian expedition, but which, for want of a cavalry force, was still left incomplete, viz., to drive the Sioux and their allies from the state, Congress took efficient action. During the months of February, March, and April, 1863, it legislated the *abrogation* of all existing treaties with the Sioux bands, or Dakotas, in the state, the forfeiture to the government of their annuities and claims, and the appropriation of \$200,000, at present, to the survivors of the massacre and sufferers from the Indian depredations. The *removal*, also, of the Sioux bands outside the limits of the state, and with them, the *removal* of the Winnebagoes also, the sale of their reservation for their benefit, and the extension of the United States laws over them, was enacted, both tribes to be transported into distant but contiguous territory. In this way, the popular demand for the execution of the reprieved Indian prisoners was abated, no less than 1,000,000 acres of their land being now thrown open to public sale at the government price, and of immense value to the settlers in the state. Though the Hon. H. M. Rice had written from Washington, to General Sibley, that "more executions would take place, if necessary," yet the cry for more blood was moderated by the vision of more compensating acres. Pursuant to this legislation, the remainder of the condemned at Mankato were, in the spring of 1863, quietly placed upon the steamer Favorite, and removed to Camp McClellan, Davenport, Iowa, where for eighteen months they were held and treated as convicts of the state prison. Of the Fort Snelling prisoners, whom disease and sorrow had spared to drag out a wretched existence, the whole number of them, now 1,300, soon followed, taking a last look at the hills and plains they loved so well. May 4, 1863, loaded on a steamer at the dock, and pelted with stones as they stood, crowded, on its boiler deck, men, women, and children, their blankets their only rampart of protection, they were sent far up the Missouri river to the Crow Creek reservation, on which neither the rain nor dew seemed to fall, their numbers reduced to 1,000 before reaching their destination. Such the *status* of things within six months after the massacre of August, 1862.

An event like the Sioux massacre, which, even in the throes of our Civil War, attracted the attention of the nation, could not but lead to serious reflection. That General Sibley

had done his whole duty, releasing the captives, arresting, trying, and condemning the Indian prisoners, and disappointing the Confederate expectation of Indian help from the Northwest, was a fact everywhere recognized. At the same time, conversant with the Indian policy of the government, and what the Indians had suffered, he was the last of men to hold that the outbreak was "without excuse," or that the thirty-eight who swung from the scaffold were "sinners above all" who dwelt in Minnesota or the United States. With the bloody cry of "extermination" he had no sympathy, although his heart was "steeled" against the guilty perpetrators of deeds too cruel to relate. He thought, wisely, that the just punishment of crime is no defense of the causes by which the crime itself was provoked, and that the terrible massacre in Minnesota, like the Civil War itself, was a judgment of Heaven for oppression and wrong, which, from the foundation of the government, had not ceased to merit divine displeasure. He saw in the events of the time only another instance of the operation of that same law to which the pagan poet referred when instructing the Romans that they suffered because of "*delicta majorum*," as well as for crimes of their own. He had, in the halls of Congress, already forewarned the nation of what was most certain to come. He, moreover, vindicated the character of the Indian from the convenient aspersion of excessive brutality and inhumanity, of which it was common to say the white man was wholly incapable. And in this he was right, all well-informed men concurring. The guilt of the massacre was a divided guilt, and at the white man's door lay a heavy responsibility, from which no argument of "public policy against individual right," nor "law of progress," "superior race," and "Christian civilization," could ever excuse. He condemned the one-sided self-justifying temper of the times inspired by lust of territorial acquisition, and greed of personal gain, which remitted to oblivion the provocation given to the Indian, and remembered only the Indian's revenge. Unwilling to abate one jot of the claims of justice, he was as unwilling to abate one jot of the claims of truth. For slander he cared nothing. With his eyes full on the facts, he could say that the Indian policy of the United States Government toward the red man was "one of the foulest blots on our national escutcheon." He had lived among the Indians, almost as one of their number, for fifteen years. He knew them well.

He repudiated the sentiment which credits to the white man's nature an excess of virtue over that in the red man's blood. And he knew, too well, that even in his most barbarous mood, when exasperated to revenge, and maddened in despair, the red man had committed no deed so foul but that the white man could match it, and even surpass it. Therefore, even in the hour of execution, he felt that the Indian, though guilty, and righteously punished, yet died the victim of the white man's avarice, injustice, and wrong.<sup>1</sup>

It is time the white man ceased to plume himself upon his superior virtue, culture, humanity, and civilization! The dark eclipse of *depravity*, common to the nature of all men,

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<sup>1</sup> The following letter of Bishop Whipple shows how intense the rage for "extermination" was, and how even the best of men were maligned and misrepresented if not chiming in with the insane demand for a massacre of all the Indians:

FARIBAULT, December 8, 1862.

To General Sibley:

DEAR SIR: Your private and official letters are here by to-day's mail. I fully approve of your reasons for your decision, and agree with you in other matters. My views have always been very sharp and well defined as to the necessity of *prompt punishment for crime*, and although a clergyman, I have always refused to sue for pardon even where my sympathies were deeply enlisted. I feel that the wretched Indians have sinned against the light of nature, and by the laws of God and man have forfeited their lives. \* \* \* It is due to the cause of truth that *false calumnies should be exposed*. The way is by no means clear for the future, but I do hope and pray that God, in his infinite mercy, will lead us where we are blind, and, out of all this trouble, bring us to a place of safety. Should any be so blind as to suppose I *sympathize with the guilty you will do me a favor by denying it, and giving my real views which aim at the reform of our corrupt system*. I am with high respect,

Yours Faithfully,

W. B. WHIPPLE,  
Bishop of Minnesota.

And what a treatment the Indians have received at the hands of the government, under its "*corrupt system*," the following words of General Sibley sadly and painfully show:

The history of the treatment of the various tribes of Indians by the United States Government constitutes one of the foulest blots on our national escutcheon. The volume containing the long list of treaties negotiated within the last century affords conclusive evidence of the violation of public faith. I will venture to assert that not one of the numerous treaties on the statute books has ever been scrupulously fulfilled by the United States Government. The poor savages have been beguiled, time after time, by promises, made only to be disregarded, to relinquish their possessory rights to the lands of their fathers. The senate has often assumed to make radical changes in these so-called treaties, without obtaining the previous assent of the other parties to the contract, and Congress has almost uniformly failed to make the stipulated appropriations within the appointed time. Agents, incompetent or dishonest, have, as a general rule, been charged with the disbursement of the funds, and with the distribution of goods and provisions, and what was not appropriated to private use has oftentimes been doled out to the recipients unequally, and gross favoritism generally practiced. The government has been guilty of utter indifference to the fate of these so-called wards of the nation, has pursued no settled policy looking to civilizing and preserving them from the numerous baleful influences which were sure to work their destruction within a brief period, and made no effort to fit them to become members of the body politic. Unfortunately for the poor creatures, they had *no votes to dispose of*, and, consequently, high and low government officials, and members of Congress, as a general rule, cared little for appeals made in their behalf by their few philanthropic friends.—Private Notes by General Sibley, pp. 3, 4.

white, black, red, russet, or yellow, has cast its dread shadow over sixty centuries, in all climes, from the day the first born of woman imbrued his hands in his brother's blood, to the sound of the last tomahawk struck in the brain of a helpless babe. Concede what natural good we may, still the evil everywhere asserts itself. Ovid's "*video meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor*," is universal. And the "*sequor*" ripens to enormities no tongue can tell. Before Dakota and Winnebago existed, it brought a deluge on the earth that swept out of life the entire race of men, eight persons only excepted, and, once more, caused hell to rain, out of heaven, brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, for their beastly pollutions. *Indian* barbarity, forsooth! Are Nero and Antiochus forgotten? To come still closer to our "culture" and "Christian civilization," is the sacking of Zutphen, St. Quentin and Antwerp deemed human? Have the massacres of St. Bartholomew, the Sicilian Vespers, Armagnac, Meerut, and Cawnpore passed out of mind? Or is the schoolboy ignorant that the wars of Sioux and Ojibwas pale away before the feuds of the Scotch Highlanders? Surajah Dowlah smothered one hundred and twenty-three Englishmen, one airless night, in the "Black Hole of Calcutta." Warren Hastings swept the Carnatic with fire and sword, destroying men, women, and children, to save an English company from bankruptcy, and murdered 1,100 men in cold blood to gain the kingdom of Oude. Who has not heard of Nana Sahib, the indignities offered to the daughters and wives of English soldiers, two hundred and six helpless women butchered in one room, the same hour? *Indian* barbarity! The English pricked the sides of the naked Sepoys with sharp bayonets, then chained them alive to the muzzles of their guns, and blew their bodies to bleeding rags, high-flying in the air! Ravallac's limbs were torn apart by horses hitched to each. Napoleon, at Jaffa, blew out of life, at the cannon's mouth, 4,000 prisoners, of whom he was "unable, otherwise, conveniently to dispose!" The Puritans offered ten dollars apiece for scalps. The sons of the Puritans carried the Queen of Pocasset's head on a pole, set on fire 500 wigwams at once, burned alive 200 men, women, and children, shot 600 as they rushed from the flames, and sold 200 to slavery forever! The Massachusetts Government paid 500 pounds sterling for every Indian scalp. Hannah Dustin, with her nurse and boy, scalped ten Indians on an island in the Mer-



rimac. The United States paid the Sioux a reward for every Fox and Sac scalp taken. What Indian's wigwam has not the white man's passion violated? What solemn treaty has not the white man's perfidy evaded? What cruelty and immorality has not the white man's cupidity committed, under the Machiavellian creed of "public necessity," "state policy," the barnyard ethics expressed in the "will of the strongest," the juristic morality of Hobbes' "Leviathan," Paley's "Expediency," and the modern Darwinian doctrine of the "progress of the race" and the "fittest to survive?" It is the gospel of the whale for the minnow, the tender grace of the lion for the lamb. And, all the while, charging "inhumanity" upon the weak, the comparatively harmless and unoffending! It is the cancer accusing the gumboil, the typhoid arraignment the scarlet fever, the jumping tooth-ache raving at the toe-corn. The scaffold of poor "Lo," whose "untutored mind" yet retained some sense of natural right to life, liberty, and happiness, has been erected, and his sandbank grave has been dug, but there are denizens of modern Bethsaidas, and Christian Capernaums full of divine instruction, white men of "culture" and "civilization," in comparison with whom poor "Lo," devoid of all this, and ranged with Nineveh and Tyre, or even Sodom itself, will enjoy a milder doom in the judgment to come! The slave Terence could say, and bring down the applause of the theatre, "I am a *man* and care for all *mankind*!"<sup>1</sup> The Indian's nature is not different from that of the white man. All the possibilities of the one are in the other. The noble qualities of a Massasoit, Uncas, and Miantonomah, of a Pocahontas, Little Paul, and Other-Day, are not mere fiction, and, so far as vice and cruelty are concerned, a King Philip and a Cut Nose are not merely equaled by a Claverhouse, a Duke of Alva, and a Borgia, but surpassed by citizens of a great so-called Christian nation, to find the seed for which five nations of the Old World were sifted by persecution, and passed through the fire!<sup>2</sup>

As already mentioned, in the telegram of General-in-Chief Halleck to Major General Pope, the president had conferred the rank of "Brigadier General, United States Volunteers," upon Colonel Sibley, September 29, 1862. It was a national recognition of his "meritorious services in fighting and de-

<sup>1</sup> "*Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto!*"

<sup>2</sup> The English, Irish, Scotch, Dutch, and Huguenots.



feating the Sioux Indians on the Yellow Medicine river," a mark of honor which came upon him unsought and unexpectedly, while in the field, and a merited compliment to his executive ability. The official notification of this military degree was received by Colonel Sibley at Camp Release, October 14, 1862, two weeks after Halleck's telegram to Pope and Colonel Sibley's organization of the military commission to try the Indians, both events being on the same day, September 29th, and three weeks after the battle of Wood Lake. The acceptance of the honor and the oath of office were forwarded to the war department at Washington, October 15, 1862, as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON, September 29, 1862.

SIR: You are hereby informed that the president of the United States has appointed you, for meritorious services in fighting and defeating the Sioux Indians on the Yellow Medicine river, a brigadier general of volunteers, in the service of the United States, to rank as such from the twenty-ninth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two. Should the senate, at their next session, advise and consent thereto, you will be commissioned accordingly.

Immediately on receipt hereof, please to communicate to this department, through the adjutant general of the army, your acceptance or non-acceptance; and, with your letter of acceptance, return the oath herewith inclosed, properly filled up, subscribed and attested, and report your age, birthplace, and the state of which you were a *permanent* resident.

You will report for duty to Major General Pope, St. Paul.

EDWIN M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War.*

*Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley.*

Congress, having reduced the number of brigadier generals, it seemed almost certain that General Sibley's appointment would fail of confirmation by the senate. The people of the state, however, without distinction of party, were determined that no forced action of the senate, reducing the number of generals, nor any cunning nor "essential rascality" of certain persons, nor "corrupt necessities of the officials of the Indian department in Minnesota,"<sup>1</sup> who had reason to remember General Sibley, should defeat the confirmation. The state government interposed at once, the legislature of Minnesota passing the following "*joint resolution*," March 5, 1863:

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<sup>1</sup> Pioneer, March 23, 1863.

JOINT RESOLUTION RELATIVE TO THE CONFIRMATION OF H. H. SIBLEY AS  
BRIGADIER GENERAL OF VOLUNTEERS.

WHEREAS, We learn with regret that the limitation placed by Congress on the number of general officers authorized to be appointed for the volunteer forces, is likely to prevent the confirmation of Brigadier General Sibley; and

WHEREAS, The good results attending the conduct of the campaign against the Sioux Indians last fall—the safe deliverance of the white captives—the surrender of so large a number of Indians—the protection assured to the frontier; all at so small a loss of life in the military operations, entitled General Sibley to the promotion so promptly bestowed after the victory of Wood Lake, and indicate his peculiar fitness for the command of the approaching campaign against the Sioux; and

WHEREAS, The failure of General Sibley's confirmation would now occasion the entire loss of his services to the public and the state (inasmuch as he holds no other commission than that heretofore tendered by the president), and would be regarded by the troops under his command, and the people of the state generally, as a public misfortune, therefore

*Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota:*

That we respectfully and urgently ask the president to appoint Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, a brigadier general of volunteers, and to assign him to the command of the district of Minnesota, for the approaching campaign against the Sioux Indians.

CHARLES D. SHERWOOD,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

IGNATIUS DONNELLY,

*President of the Senate.*

Approved, March fifth, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three.

ALEX. RAMSEY.

STATE OF MINNESOTA,

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

ST. PAUL, Jan. 4, 1863.

I certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the original on file in this office.

D. BLAKELY,

*Secretary of State.*

[SEAL.]

This “*joint resolution*” was at once officially communicated from the state capitol to General Sibley:

STATE OF MINNESOTA,

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

ST. PAUL, Jan. 5, 1863.

MY DEAR GENERAL: I anticipated your request some little time since—having had copies of the resolution in question printed and forwarded to each of our members at the opening of the present session of Congress.

Allow me to express the hope, in addition, that your confirmation as brigadier general, and promotion to a still higher rank, may be among the earliest coming events.

I inclose a copy of the resolution as forwarded to Washington.

Very Truly and Respectfully Yours,  
D. BLAKELY.

*To Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, Commanding District of Minnesota.*

The United States Senate not yet having confirmed the appointment, and the people of Minnesota, fearing that the withdrawal from the service of a man to whom, already, the state was so much indebted, would be a fatal check to the general welfare, the success of military operations in the department, and to the business interests of the state, presented to General Sibley the following appeal, signed by more than fifty of the leading business firms of the city of St. Paul:

ST. PAUL, March 19, 1863.

*To General H. H. Sibley:*

DEAR SIR: The undersigned beg leave to express their disappointment and regret at the failure of the senate to confirm your nomination as brigadier general. But feeling confident of your reappointment, we respectfully urge that the general welfare, and *immediate business interests* of the state at large, demand your acceptance, should the president tender it.

In this we are satisfied that we express the views of all classes of our people.

At this most critical period, we should deem your retirement from the field a *calamity* which would certainly weaken, and possibly destroy, public *confidence*, now so happily restored in the border counties under your able military administration.

Believing that the *welfare of the people of Minnesota* will outweigh all other considerations, and overcome any personal scruples which might otherwise prompt you to decline a reappointment, and assuring you of our confidence and esteem we subscribe ourselves.

To this testimonial of esteem General Sibley returned the following reply:

ST. PAUL, March 23, 1863.

GENTLEMEN: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the document signed by so many of the leading men and firms in this city, in which you urge me not to decline a renomination of brigadier general, if tendered, as you do not doubt it will be. Since that was written, a telegraphic dispatch from the secretary of war has reached me, announcing my reappointment by the president, so that your prognostications have proved to be correct.

While I feel duly grateful for the confidence manifested by you in my management of military affairs in this district, and for the kind expressions of regard for myself personally, it is nevertheless true, that I rather dreaded

than desired to be placed in a position, by the act of the president, where I must promptly accept or decline the honorable station to which he has so repeatedly nominated me. It has been neither by my suggestion, nor at my solicitation, that I was originally named for the post, nor have I since made any effort to retain it, or to secure a confirmation by the senate. Indeed the deranged state of my private affairs, which have been almost totally neglected for many months, apart from any other consideration, afforded a very strong reason against my remaining longer in the service.

On the other hand, I recognize the right of the country to its full extent, to call upon any one of its citizens to perform a public duty, at whatever sacrifice to himself, and while I feel too much diffidence in my own abilities, to venture to hope that I can meet the wishes or expectations of my friends, in a career comparatively so new to me, I cannot disregard the general sentiment of my state, as signified by the unanimous resolutions of the legislature asking for my confirmation, and by the representations of numerous private citizens. I shall, therefore, dispatch to the military authorities at Washington, my respectful acceptance of the position to which the president has generously seen fit to re-assign me.

It would not be proper for me to make known the plans of the contemplated campaign against the hostile Sioux. But I can state, without any impropriety, that the major general commanding the department has given me the most cheering assurances of support in their prosecution, and manifests a determination to bring this war with the savages to a speedy conclusion, by the employment of all the means at his disposal.

The proposed expedition will be a tedious and laborious one to all connected with it, but with the aid of the gallant regiments under my command, composed of our own citizens, all of whom, officers and soldiers alike, are anxious to take the field, I humbly trust that enough will be accomplished during the coming season, to insure the frontier against any danger from Indian forays hereafter, and to relieve entirely the apprehensions of our citizens.

I am gentlemen, most respectfully,

Your Friend and Fellow Citizen,

H. H. SIBLEY.

*To Messrs. Thompson, Brother & Co., Charles Schaffer, John S. Prince, etc., etc.,  
etc., St. Paul, Minnesota.*

Friday, March 20, 1863, President Lincoln renominated General Sibley for the military rank and position which practically he had more than filled with such marked success since his appointment as colonel by Governor Ramsey. From the first moment to the last, he had exercised all the powers and wielded the command of a general officer. The honor, twice conferred upon him, was deemed an inadequate expression of what was due under the circumstances, the president himself desiring to promote him to the more eminent distinction of major general, but was prevented from so doing by the forced reduction of the list of generals, through the senate's action.

Under date of March 23, 1863, the *Pioneer* of St. Paul gave expression to the feeling of the state in this matter, and presented the actual situation, in the following terms:

**GENERAL SIBLEY RENOMINATED AS BRIGADIER GENERAL.**

We are gratified to announce that, on Friday last, the president renominated General Sibley to the position which he has filled with distinguished honor during the period of our frontier difficulties.

This could hardly have been otherwise. His appointment as brigadier was conferred on him unsought and unexpectedly, while he was on service in the Indian country, and in compliment to the military abilities which he had there displayed.

Returning from the field, at the close of the fall campaign, his administration of affairs in the district of Minnesota has been marked by such practical good judgment, energy and economy, as to call forth the commendations of the heads of the several military bureaus with which he has had connection, and to induce the president, unsuggested by any consideration except his own merit, to send his name to the senate for confirmation as a major general.

The forced reduction of the list of generals, under the action of the senate, compelled the president to change General Sibley's nomination to that of a brigadier; and the essential rascality of ——— and the corrupt necessities of the officials of the Indian department in this state, unjustly and unfortunately prevented his confirmation.

We regret to learn that there are doubts as to General Sibley's acceptance of this renomination. We trust these doubts are unfounded. The people of the state, without distinction of party, or regard to locality, desire his continuance in command. It is only those, headed by ———, who wish to make corrupt gains by swindling the government and speculating upon the distresses of the people, that desire him to be over-slaughed.

Our citizens have given General Sibley every possible exhibition of their confidence, and this confidence has been most handsomely and perfectly seconded and indorsed by the president in his renomination. He will be sure, therefore, of the hearty support of both government and people in the performance of his duties; and this is all any officer can expect or should desire.

His declination will afford satisfaction only to ——— and the swindling crew who are leagued with him; and it is not in the line of his duty, and should not be in the line of his pleasure, to square his actions to their interests. On the contrary, as they desired his displacement to further their corrupt designs against the government and our people, he owes it to both, as well as to himself, to retain his command and prevent their accomplishment.

In obedience to the unanimous wish everywhere, General Sibley accepted the renomination tendered by the president, and prepared for the organization of the second military expedition against the Sioux.

## CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL SIBLEY'S SECOND MILITARY EXPEDITION AGAINST THE SIOUX.—PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.—GENERAL SULLY CO-OPERATING.—THE ADVANCE FROM CAMP POPE, JUNE 16, 1863.—DETRACTION POWERLESS.—THE ROUTE.—CHEYENNE RIVER.—COMMUNICATION OPENED WITH THE HALF-BREEDS AT CAMP DOUGLAS.—NEWS.—CAMP ATCHISON.—JULY 20, 1863.—COUNCIL OF WAR.—FORCED MARCH IN PURSUIT TOWARD THE MISSOURI RIVER, OR TOWARD DEVIL'S LAKE.—OVERTAKES THE INDIANS IN FORCE.—THREE DECISIVE BATTLES.—BATTLE OF BIG MOUND, JULY 24; OF DEAD BUFFALO LAKE, JULY 26; OF STONY LAKE, JULY 28, 1863.—DESCRIPTION OF THE BATTLES.—THE INDIAN FORCE.—THEIR SPLENDID SEMICIRCLE AND ADVANCE.—THE YOUNG TETON.—STAMPEDE OF THE INDIANS TOWARD THE MISSOURI RIVER.—PURSUIT.—GENERAL SULLY FAILS TO INTERCEPT.—THE INDIANS CROSS THE MISSOURI JULY 29TH.—“SIOUX CROSSING.”—“SIBLEY ISLAND.”—SHELLING THE WOODS.—IMPOSSIBLE TO PURSUE FARTHER.—PRAIRIE ON FIRE.—SIOUX WAGONS AND PROPERTY DESTROYED.—LOSS OF LIEUTENANT BEEVER.—CAMP BRADEN.—GENERAL ORDER.—HOMEWARD MARCH, AUGUST 1, 1863.—REASON OF GENERAL SULLY'S DETENTION.—GENERAL SIBLEY'S EXPEDITION A GREAT SUCCESS.—UNPARALLELED IN INDIAN WARFARE.—CARE OF HIS TROOPS.—LOSSES INFLICTED ON THE ENEMY.—IMPORTANCE OF GENERAL SIBLEY'S SUCCESS TO THE WHOLE COUNTRY.—ITS RELATION TO THE SOUTHERN REBELLION.—THE NATIONAL CRISIS.—ATTITUDE OF ENGLAND.—FOREIGN POWERS.—CROSSING THE MISSOURI.—CROSSING THE POTOMAC.—PUBLIC OPINION IN REFERENCE TO GENERAL SIBLEY'S CAMPAIGNS.—EULOGIES FROM MILITARY OFFICERS.—HON. E. M. STANTON.—THE LEGISLATURE.—MAJOR GENERAL POPE.—CHARLES SUMNER.—PRESIDENT LINCOLN.—PRESIDENT JOHNSON.—BREVETTED MAJOR GENERAL, UNITED STATES ARMY, “FOR EFFICIENT AND MERITORIOUS SERVICES.”—DOMESTIC GRIEF AND AFFLICTION WHILE IN THE FIELD SERVING THE STATE.—NOTES FROM HIS DIARY.—KEEPS THE SABBATH, STRICTLY, DURING THE CAMPAIGN.—INCONSOLABLE SORROW.—DREAMS IN THE TENT.—ANXIETY ABOUT HIS COUNTRY.—DESCRIPTION OF THE MARCH HOMEWARD.—ARRIVES AT ST. PAUL SEPTEMBER, 8, 1863.—MARVELOUS FACTS.—MORAL EFFECT UPON THE INDIANS.—SIBLEY IN CONGRESS AND SIBLEY ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.—EXAMPLE TO MINNESOTA.—PROGRESS AND CIVILIZATION.—CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.—SKETCH OF LITTLE CROW.—HIS FATE.

GENERAL SIBLEY'S military career was not yet closed. The lack of a sufficient cavalry force to pursue the retreating Indians in the fall of 1862, rendered necessary a second military expedition in 1863. Notwithstanding the successful campaign

of the previous year, various predatory bands of savages still disturbed the tranquillity of the frontier settlements of Minnesota, renewing their depredations and committing their deeds of murder and violence, as before. , Roving and starved, deprived of their lands and their game, and nursing their wrath, their nomadic life could only be one of revenge and reprisal. Their general camp was now believed to be at or near Minnewaukan or Devil's lake, in North Dakota, a large sheet of brackish water, forty miles long, twelve wide, and distant five hundred miles from St. Paul. Here, Little Crow fled, after the battle of Wood Lake, and joining to the remnant of his own force 2,000 of the Upper Minnesota Sioux, augmented by portions of other tribes, the whole amounting to nearly 4,000 warriors, resolved on a general war. For the more effectual security of the frontier, and further to punish the Indian hordes, the second military expedition was organized by General Sibley, pursuant to the order of Major General Pope, commanding the military department of the Northwest. The plan of campaign was simple. To General Sibley, starting from Camp Pope at the mouth of the Redwood, was given the main force, whose duty it was to move up the Minnesota river, and, crossing the plains, drive the Sioux before him. To General Sully, starting from Sioux City, was given 3,000 men, mounted,<sup>1</sup> and whose duty it was to move up the east bank of the Missouri river in order to cut off any retreat of the Indians to the west side. The objective point of both commands was Devil's lake, where it was hoped that the Indians, driven by both converging columns, would be compelled to fight, and suffer a final defeat, and so the State of Minnesota and part of Dakota be forever freed from their savage incursions. To each general a special mission was intrusted, the one depending for his supplies upon the navigation of the Missouri river, the other upon his military train.

Leaving St. Paul, June 6, 1863, General Sibley arrived at Camp Pope, twenty-five miles beyond Fort Ridgley, and one hundred and fifty miles distant from St. Paul, June 7th, where the troops were ordered to report, and was welcomed with a grand military reception. As the Indian combination was the most formidable ever known in American history, the

<sup>1</sup> Bryant's statement, *Indian Massacre*, p. 491, that Sibley and Sully had each 3,000 troops, 1,000 cavalry in Sibley's command, and chiefly cavalry in Sully's command, is erroneous. Sully's force was 3,000 men, all cavalry. Sibley's force was 3,000 infantry and 860 cavalry.



force employed to resist it was appropriately large.<sup>1</sup> Apart from General Sully's 3,000 troops, the troops assigned to General Sibley, as commander of the expedition, amounted to nearly 4,000 effective men; namely, one company pioneers Ninth regiment, Captain Chase; ten companies Sixth regiment, Colonel Crooks; eight companies Tenth regiment, Colonel Baker; nine companies Seventh regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall; eight pieces of artillery, Captain Jones; nine companies of Minnesota Mounted Rangers, Colonel McPhail; besides seventy volunteer Indian scouts under Majors Brown, McLeod, and Dooley; in all, 3,052 infantry, 800 cavalry, 148 artillery, with a train of 225 six-mule teams for commissary stores, camp equipage, and ordnance, the whole force and train, when in motion, five miles long.<sup>2</sup> The staff of General Sibley were Adjutant General Olin, Brigade Commissary Forbes, Assistant Commissary and Ordnance Officer Atchinson, Clerk of Commissary Spencer, Quartermaster Corning, Assistant Quartermaster Kimball, besides First Lieutenant Pope, with First Lieutenant Beever subsequently added, and Second Lieutenants Flandrau and Hawthorne, acting as aids-de-camp. To these the Rev. S. R. Riggs was joined as chaplain of the staff.

All things ready, the order to move was issued, June 16, 1863, "thermometer one hundred degrees in the tent." As, during the former campaign, so once again, the tongue of detraction was busy. It was not enough that a skillful commander, successful beyond precedent in Indian affairs, should devote "sixteen hours a day," with sleepless nights, to the task of standing between the state and its destruction, or be called to confront a foe, numbering, at this moment, 4,000 lodges, 30,000 inmates, and 6,000 warriors, whose territorial area was 200,000 square miles, from the Red River of the North

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1 He who moves without an adequate force to meet the enemy is justly chargeable, in case of defeat, with the sacrifice, in vain, of the lives of his men. Battles are not to be fought for the sake of fighting, and success must at least be reasonably certain before an engagement is sought. An advance and action are only justified "when some serious disadvantage is bound to result from failure to fight, or when the advantage of a possible victory far transcends the consequence of a probable defeat." An enemy's mode of warfare is always an object of first consideration, and with it the issues sought to be attained. "War has a higher end than mere bloodshed, and military history points, for study and commendation, to campaigns which have been conducted over a large field of operations with important results and without a single general engagement. The commander merits condemnation who, from ambition, ignorance, or a weak submission to the dictation of popular clamor, has squandered the lives of his soldiers.—Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies, Vol. XVI, p. 57.

2 "In all, about 3,200 infantry and artillery, and about 70 scouts and 225 teams." — Diary of General Sibley, p. 8.

to the Black Hills, and from the forks of the Platte to Devil's lake. A fire must be kindled in his rear. The occurrence of every Indian outrage, no matter how distant from General Sibley's camp, or line of march, was instantly ascribed to his inaction, and insane charges of incompetence, delay, and irresolution were showered upon him as fast as certain writers could invent and empty them.<sup>1</sup> Disappointed ambition, envy, jealousy, retaliation for defeated schemes devised for personal emolument, insinuations of disloyalty, and political and partisan asperity, all did their best to injure and disparage. It was no new experience. It had been tried the year before. In the midst of the Civil War, a Democratic military officer, who failed to work miracles and do impossibilities, fared ill at the hands of his Republican opponents, no matter how loyally he stood to his flag, while yet he refused to surrender his Democratic principles. If a Hancock, Sickles, Logan, and others, could not evade the shafts of calumny aimed at their names, lest their deeds should win for them a generous remembrance in days to come, General Sibley could as little expect immunity from similar injustice. Still more. In a free country like America, where every man is at liberty to account himself a commander, the successors of "the goose who gabbled to Hannibal how a campaign should be conducted, and a battle fought," could not fail to be as numerous as they were conspicuous. It was easy, moreover, to croak and find fault with General Sibley, marching twice as rapidly as General Sully, thermometer standing at 94°, 100°, 104°, 108° and 111°, in the shade, and ridicule his movement as that of a "terrific Brobdingnag" chasing with slow motion, and seeking "to crush the *Sioux Lilliput* under the ponderous heel of strategy!"<sup>2</sup>—but it was not quite so easy to take the place of Halleck and Stanton, Pope and Sibley, Malmros and Ramsey, and "extirpate," even

1 No accusations could be more unjust. So far as the frontier was concerned, Colonel Miller of the Seventh regiment was assigned by General Sibley to the duty of guarding the same, during the absence of General Sibley. In Colonel Miller's command were part of the Seventh regiment, two companies of the Tenth, nine companies of the Ninth, the whole of the Eighth regiment, one company of mounted rangers, and such other troops as could be spared. These were spread along the line of the frontier to secure the settlers, as far as was possible, from any outrages and depredations by roving parties of Indians. A network of fortifications existed along the whole frontier garrisoned by 2,000 soldiers. The inherent defects of a regular military organization, for which General Sibley could not be held responsible, were, moreover, sought to be remedied by a corps of independent scouts, organized by order of the adjutant general, to operate wherever they might, without regard to the regular service. Everything that could be done was done to meet the peculiar modes of Indian warfare, and protect the people of Minnesota.

2 Quoted from the St. Paul Press, and repelled in Heard's Hist. Sioux War, p. 306.

with the "fine-tooth comb of irregular scouts" scratching the forest everywhere, those skipping Scythians of the hairy woods, of whom what Cæsar said of their ancient prototypes was only too true, "*difficilius invenire quam interficere*," — "it is harder to catch than it is to kill them!" It made no difference. In those days, when North and South were in conflict, a Democrat was, by thousands of stalwart Republicans, christened, *ipso facto*, a "wool-dyed rebel," whose salvation either in this or another world was regarded as wholly beyond the power of God!

Happily for General Sibley, intrenched so firmly in the confidence of the state, these shafts fell pointless and powerless at his feet. Forward the expedition went, marching from camp to camp, the column and train advancing under a broiling sun; cavalry, infantry, and artillery; scouting, exploring, skirmishing, and returning; their military route passing through solitudes, sandhills and bluffs, coolies and coteaux, timbered or bare; streams stagnant and covered with scum; ridges loaded with boulders; prairies blasted by fire which the Indians had kindled to hinder the march; lightning, thunder, and rain; ground broken and rocky; grasshoppers thick as the locusts of Egypt and filling the air like snowflakes; huge flies obedient to Beelzebub, and, by the billion, drawing the blood from mules, horses, and men! Still, onward they moved, amid marshes and mounds, and dust clouds raised by the buffalo; wind hot as the breath of a simoon, and filled with suffocating smoke; trails rugged and tortuous, made by the Indians retreating across the wildest regions; yet not without landscapes of valleys and hills, prairies and plains, splendid as Nature could make them; westward, northward, upward, downward, and between, till the banks of the Missouri were reached. At first, the Indian retreat was in the direction of the British line. Made aware, perhaps, by some of their trans-Missouri friends, of the delay of General Sully by reason of low water in the river, preventing the arrival of his supplies, they *changed* their line of retreat, toward the Missouri river itself, expecting further reinforcements, thus transferring the Sioux War from the boundaries of Minnesota to the banks of that stream. Three weeks had passed away since the order to march was given at Camp Pope. July 4th, the Big Bend of the river Cheyenne was reached, the woods of the sand mounds, and of the "*Chien qui Gratte*," seen on the

right, and the hill "*Shonkah-wakkon-chincha-tah*" looming in the far distance on the left. Letters from Abercrombie conveyed the rumor that 1,000 lodges of Indians were concentrated at Devil's lake, and the Sioux intended to come and offer battle. A week more passed by, no Indian force appearing.

The failure of the expedition had already been predicted, from the long drought, the firing of the prairies, the excessive heat, and the grasshoppers. General Sibley was determined, however, that, so far as his command was concerned, there should be no failure. Having opened communication, at Camp Douglas, this side of Devil's lake, with some Red River Chippewa half-breeds, July 17th, he learned the whereabouts of Standing Buffalo, Mahtowakkon, Red Plume, and Sweet Corn, and that six hundred lodges of Indians had separated into three camps, west of the James river, and were making for the Missouri. The doubt that hung over this information was removed at Camp Atchison, where, July 20th, General Sibley received a friendly visit from three hundred Chippewa half-breeds, with Father Andre their Catholic priest at their head, and whom, addressing in French, and thanking them for their friendly visit, he dismissed in peace. It was plain that, from the further information now obtained, Devil's lake was no longer to be thought of, unless the entire information should prove false. General Sibley acted promptly. Assembling his colonels and regimental officers, in council of war, he announced to them his purpose to leave the footsore and inefficient men and heavier portion of the train in Camp Atchison, with sufficient guard, and hasten, at once, by forced marches, to overtake the retreating foe. The proposition was hailed with delight. Immediately, with 1,436 infantry, 520 cavalry, 100 pioneers, and artillery, 25 days' rations loaded on his wagons, he started in pursuit, himself borne in an ambulance, owing to the painful wrenching of his knee and hip-joint caused by the miring of his horse. Thoughtful and cautious, he says, "I am bearing farther west to enable me to strike *either* toward the coteau of the Missouri, where the Indians are reported to be, *or* Devil's lake, as the position of the Indians may render necessary." "Mail, to-day, from Fort Abercrombie, bringing papers to date of twelfth instant, in which are misrepresentations based upon statements of \_\_\_\_\_ and others. We are determined to falsify these predictions of failure."<sup>1</sup> July 22d he had made forty-eight

<sup>1</sup> General Sibley's Diary, pp. 50, 56.

miles west of Camp Atchison, and corraled his train at Camp Kimball, having crossed the James river. An Indian scout, sent to feel after Standing Buffalo, reports that the Indian bands were on the Missouri coteau. "Shall hang him," says General Sibley, "if he has deceived me!" Still pursuing, General Sibley, July 23d, crossed the second ridge of the Missouri coteau, and, next day, passed Lake Sibley, "a handsome sheet of water, two and a half miles from Big Mound," the scouts reporting a large body of Indians in the neighborhood, Red Plume and Standing Buffalo among them. The long-desired moment for effective action had at last come.

The week commencing July 24, 1863, is crowded with extraordinary interest. It presents the history of three decisive engagements fought by General Sibley against the most powerful combination of Indian warriors ever massed together, at any one time, in the annals of Indian warfare; three separate victories over a total Indian force 2,200 to 2,500 strong, ending in routing the Indians with great loss, and driving them, broken and discomfited, in wild confusion, across the Missouri river.

*The battle of Big Mound* was fought Friday, July 24, 1863. As soon as the news of the Indian approach was made known by the scouts to General Sibley, about 1 P. M., the order was given to corral the train on the shore of a salt lake near by, and throw up earthworks as a precaution against sudden attack on the transportation. Parties of Indians soon appeared on the neighboring hills, venturing near a portion of General Sibley's scouts, four hundred yards from the camp, Red Plume, a chief opposed to the war, yet in the Indian camp, having sent word to General Sibley to beware of a plan devised to invite him and his officers to a conference with Standing Buffalo at the Big Mound and then treacherously shoot them. Surgeon Weiser of the First Minnesota Rangers having incautiously approached, the Indians extending their hands in a friendly way, was suddenly shot through the heart. Lieutenant Freeman, while distant with some scouts, was also killed. With the shooting of Dr. Weiser, the battle was precipitated, the savages encircling those portions of the camp not protected by the lake, the Big Mound being situated one and one-half miles' away at the terminus of a ravine between it and the camp. Precisely at 3 P. M., a thunder-storm boom-

ing, the First battalion of cavalry, Colonel McPhail, supported by two companies of the Seventh regiment, was ordered to advance, and, dividing the Indians, hold the ground where Weiser had fallen. The Sixth regiment, Colonel Crooks, with part of the Seventh, was deployed on the hills on the right flank of the camp, Lieutenant Colonel Averill, with two companies, being deployed on the left flank. Colonel Marshall, with five companies of the Seventh, was directed to advance up the ravine on the left of the cavalry now dismounted on account of the extremely broken condition of the ground. Part of the Tenth regiment, Colonel Baker, was, for the present, retained in care of the camp. General Sibley, ascending a hill with a six-pounder, supported by one company of the Tenth regiment, under Captain Edgerton, opened fire with spherical case shot upon the Indians in possession of the upper part of the ravine, and ordered a general advance of the troops. The Indians, at least 1,500 in number, including families, retreating before the destructive volleys of musketry and shell, were forced back over successive ridges, moving southward to their camp five miles distant, where the retreat became a rout and a panic;—the camp abandoned, their families rushing before them in wild dismay, Colonel McPhail, supported by the Seventh regiment, part of the Tenth, and Whipple's section of a battery, closely pursuing. Five successive charges were made, in the midst of the terrific thunderstorm, the lightning killing one private, and loosening the grasp of McPhail's hand on his saber while engaged with an Indian. The loss of the Indians was eighty killed and wounded, twenty-one being scalped in the last charge.<sup>1</sup> The trail was strewn with all manner of articles, provisions, clothes, skins, utensils, and furniture. The infantry reached a point ten miles, the cavalry fifteen miles, beyond General Sibley's camp.

Nothing could be more complete than this victory, and the Indians were now absolutely in the power of General Sibley. But, while man proposes, a Higher Power disposes. As the wise man learned by experience that "time and chance happen to all," so two important circumstances here contributed to shape the final results of the expedition. One was the

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<sup>1</sup> This white man's barbarity was severely discountenanced by General Sibley. "I am ashamed," said he, "to say that all were scalped. Shame upon such brutality! God's image should not be thus mutilated or disfigured." — *Diary*, p. 69.



failure of General Sully to appear at the time expected, the other the misdelivery of an important order. General Sibley had sent his order, by Lieutenant Beever, a faithful and accomplished officer, to Colonel McPhail "not to follow the Indians after dark but pursue them while it was light enough to do so," instructing him "to bivouac upon the field if not attacked, but, if attacked, or threatened with a night attack, to fall back, at once, on his supports, and, if necessary, return to the camp."<sup>1</sup> The order was mistakenly delivered, Colonel McPhail understanding it to be an order *not* to bivouac upon the field, but repair to camp, at nightfall, thus avoiding a night attack. Colonel Marshall, still disposed to remain, yet yielded to Colonel McPhail, the ranking officer, and cavalry, artillery, and infantry retraced their steps to their original position. To his amazement, early next morning when about to advance, the wagons ready and the camp broken up, General Sibley saw the pursuing men returning, and learned, with deep regret, the unfortunate mistake by which nearly two whole days were now lost to the expedition, and a dearly won advantage forfeited. A day's rest *must* now be taken, and the next day be wellnigh consumed in regaining the point reached the night previous. The cavalry, artillery, and infantry, were exhausted by the march, the battle, the chase, and the counter-march, having been twenty-four hours in action, covering forty miles, without rest, and, moreover, destitute of water for twelve hours; a feat almost unparalleled. None so deeply deplored the mistake as the anguished officer who so excitedly and innocently committed it, and whose subsequently tomahawked head, and body pierced by a ball and three arrows, told how loyally he had served a commander he loved even unto death.<sup>2</sup>

*The battle of Dead Buffalo Lake* was fought Sunday, July 26, 1863. The evacuated Indian camp was passed early on the morning of the twenty-sixth, and, about noon, the scout alarm

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<sup>1</sup> Diary, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Frederic Holt Beever was a young volunteer Englishman, of high education, wealth, and accomplishment, a graduate of Oxford, who sought and was given a place on General Sibley's staff. Noting his untimely death, which occurred July 29th, while bearing back an answer to an order to Colonel Crooks, General Sibley says: "His body was found in the dense timber near the river. Two pools of blood on the side of the trail where the Indians had been in ambush, indicated that B. had not fallen unavenged, but had shot at least two of his assailants before succumbing. He was a model of a courteous, modest gentleman, and his death is much lamented in camp."—Diary, p. 76. His body was "buried with funeral honors" at Camp Slaughter, July 31, 1863.



of "*Indians coming!*" was raised. A line of skirmishers, under Colonel Crooks, was at once thrown forward six hundred yards, supported by Captain Chase and his pioneers, with Whipple's section of six-pounders, in order to check this Indian advance. Discharges of spherical case shot caused the Indians to retreat, but only to commence, as usual, encircling the camp. A flank movement, attempted on the left, was frustrated by Captain Taylor and his company of mounted rangers, who next hastened to the support of Lieutenant Colonel Averill, resisting, with two companies of the Sixth regiment, the force assailing another portion of the camp. The final assault was made at three o'clock in the afternoon, by the reinforced Indians, who dashed, by circuitous route, to the extreme left of the camp, with a design to stampede the mules herded on the shore of the lake. This bold attempt was quickly met and repulsed by Wilson's and Davy's companies of cavalry, Major McLaren at once extending a line of six companies of the Sixth regiment, and thus effectually securing that flank from further attack. The Indians, foiled in their charge, retired from the contest, leaving a goodly number of their dead and wounded on the field. Their force during the day ranged from seven hundred to eight hundred. Nine were killed by one man, all Sissetons and Cut Heads, and each was scalped. At nightfall, earthworks were thrown up as a defense against sudden surprise.

*The battle of Stony Lake* was fought Tuesday, July 28, 1863. Nothing was more certain than that the Indians were making for the Missouri river, closely pressed by General Sibley, and fighting desperately as they halted a moment to give their wretched wives, mothers, and children, a transient relief from the horrors of the chase. Their only hope of escape lay in the absence of General Sully. Again, by forced marching, General Sibley overtook them. On the morning of the twenty-eighth, as the rear of the train filed round the end of a narrow lake, a mile long, the Tenth regiment being in the advance ascending a long hill, a scout suddenly waved his blanket, in token of danger, when from every sand hill on every side the Indians seemed to spring, as by magic, out of the ground, and began to encircle the camp. According to the estimates of Colonels Crooks and Marshall, and Major Brown, their number could not have been less than from 2,000

to 2,500.<sup>1</sup> Whatever direction some may have taken when, breaking up into three separate camps, they commenced moving southward, these in front of General Sibley had clearly been reinforced by their trans-Missouri friends. Not only the Lower Sissetons and part of the Yanktonnais, but the trans-Missouri Tetons also were present. General Sibley, riding past Colonel Baker, to the top of the ridge, directed him to deploy two companies, at once, as skirmishers, and sent orders to the regimental commanders to take their positions, in haste, according to the program of the line of march. Not a moment too soon had the blanket been waved, or the order given. Onward the Indians came, with fiendish yells, "their vast numbers enabling them to form *two-thirds of a circle, five or six miles in extent*,<sup>2</sup> along the whole line of which they were seeking for some weak point upon which to precipitate themselves."<sup>3</sup> Their advance, splendid as swift, was foiled, however, and their repeated efforts to break through General Sibley's lines were sorely disappointed. Colonel Crooks, with the Sixth regiment, on the right flank, and Colonel Marshall, with the Seventh and McPhail's cavalry, on the left flank, effectually repulsed every attempt. The brunt of the conflict was borne by the Tenth regiment, Colonel Baker, in front, where the Indian assault was most gallantly met and broken. The artillery dislodged from their holes and lurking places in the stony ground, south of the lake, the enemy there concealed. At last the order was given to advance, in full force, in battle line, out on the open prai-

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1 In General Sibley's General Order, No. 51, the number is put at 2,000, but more accurate information, after the battle, increased the figures. Sibley's telegram to Pope says "2,000 to 2,500." His diary notes the forces as from "2,200 to 2,500." So, also, his official report to Major General Pope. In the Seminole War, the Seminoles could only bring into the field "1,910 warriors, of whom 250 were negro slaves," their territory being only 47,000 square miles, bloodhounds being used to hunt them, and \$200 reward offered for every Indian scalp. General Scott and the ablest officers of the army were in the field against them, and, after seven years' fighting, were compelled to make peace with them. The "*Sioux Lilliput*" General Sibley had to deal with could muster 4,000 warriors, did muster nearly 2,500 in this one engagement, had a territory of 200,000 square miles, and were encouraged to fight not only by the Confederacy of the South, but by French and English influences.—Diary, p. 71; Rebellion Records, Vol. XIV; Dakota War-Whoop, p. 397; Bryant's Indian Massacre, p. 494; Heard's Sioux War, p. 388.

2 Official Report to Major General Pope.—Rebellion Record.

3 General Sibley referred to this scene—in personal conversation with the writer—as "one of the most magnificent sights" he ever saw. "Their advance as they deployed was a perfect picture." So Colonel Flandrau describes the scene of their advance upon New Ulm, the year previous, expanding in "fan-like" order and "encircling" the place, as "very fine and highly exciting."—Magazine of Western History, April, 1888, p. 661.

rie, and move in the direction of the families of the Indians, firing front, right, and left. The order was executed with great spirit. The volleys were rapid and incessant, and the six-pounders and two sections of mountain howitzers whirled their exploding shells into plunging ponies and men. The savages, seeing the design of the movement, broke, running in the same direction, and withdrew from the field. The flight was swift. The Indian camp contained "nearly 10,000 souls."<sup>1</sup> The punishment was severe. It was the last desperate struggle of the haughty Dakotas this side the Missouri river. Had General Sully's force only appeared in time, according to the design of the expedition, the Indians, caught between upper and nether millstones, had been ground to powder.

Two days more remain of this eventful week of forced marching and fighting. Monday, July 27th, the trail of the retreating Indians was followed, until, in the distance, "*La Butte de Missouri*" hove into sight, the Indians and General Sibley's advance having "lively skirmishes" during the day, not a few of the former being wounded or killed.

A Young Teton was caught on the twenty-eighth, whose exploit, in successfully evading the bullets of his pursuers by holding up, backhanded, behind him, his outstretched buffalo robe, jerked like a shuttle from side to side, as he ran skipping with zigzag motion, had won for him great admiration. "A perfect Apollo in form," he was led to the tent of General Sibley. Having proved his non-participation in the fight, and mere presence for the sake of "seeing how the Indians could whip the whites," and being a noble character,—heir to the chieftainship of his tribe,—he was sometime afterward released by General Sibley, who sent a kind note to his father, recommending him always to be at peace, and to treat with mercy any white captives, in view of the fact that he had spared the life of his son. Such deeds are wise as they are generous, and full of good fruit. General Sibley still continued his violent march, having not only fought the battle of Stony Lake, but advanced eighteen miles the same day, with quadrupled teams, in close column, camping that evening, at Camp Slaughter, Apple creek. The next day, Wednesday, July 29th, crossing

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<sup>1</sup> Official Report to Major General Pope.

No such concentration of force has, so far as my information extends, ever been made by the savages of the American Continent.—General Sibley.

the Apple creek, thermometer one hundred and four degrees in the shade, the expedition made sixteen miles of rapid and difficult progress, the cavalry and six-pounders in advance, and, in the afternoon, "*struck the Missouri river about four miles above Burnt Boat island, where a natural passage exists, through the bluffs, to the river. The Indian camp was plainly visible on the bluffs opposite, and the hills were lined with savages, watching our line of march.*"<sup>1</sup>

Here was the terminal point of the expedition, nearly six hundred miles from St. Paul, or by the odometer, five hundred and eighty-five miles. *Here the Indians had crossed, not caring to risk another engagement with General Sibley. General Sully had failed to intercept.* Shelling the dense timber, one and one-half miles thick, through which the Indian trails passed to the banks of the river, and where Lieutenant Beaver lost his life, at the hands of straggling Indians in ambush, Colonel Crooks, with the Sixth regiment, Colonel McPhail with the cavalry, and others, were ordered to advance, immediately, to the edge of the river. General Sibley and the main column, "at 4 P. M., same day, moved down to the banks of Apple river, near the Missouri, and *encamped on a high table-land.*"<sup>2</sup> The detachments sent into the woods returned to the camp, after a brief but ineffectual exchange of shots with the Indians across the river. Rockets were thrown up and guns fired, in the hope that General Sully might, even yet, be near, but in vain. At midnight, the long roll was suddenly sounded, the prairie having been set on fire by the Indians, and the alarm of "Indians!" given. General Sibley ordered the grass around the camp to be also fired at once, fighting fire with fire, and throwing scouts out in advance. At 7 A. M., July 30th, a detachment of eleven companies, under the command of Colonel Crooks, was sent back to the "Sioux Crossing" to destroy the wagons and other property left by the Indians this side the river, and to search for Lieutenant Beaver's body. After dark, the detachment returned to camp, having burned more than one hundred wagons and vehicles of various sorts,

<sup>1</sup> Diary, p. 72. "The Burnt Boat Island" is now called "Sibley Island," and the "natural passage" is now called the "*Sioux Crossing.*" The latitude is 46° 32' and the longitude 100° 15'. The banks of the Missouri were densely timbered one and one-half miles thick. The place here referred to is not far from Bismarck, where the Northern Pacific railroad overspans the Missouri river.

<sup>2</sup> This was on the evening of July 29th, and the camp here formed was called "Camp Braden," the place where Lieutenant Beaver's recovered body was "buried with funeral honors," July 31, 1863.

also bearing back the corpse of the lamented young Englishman, and of the private of the Sixth regiment, who also had been murdered. Again, without answer, the signal guns were fired and rockets sent up for Sully. *Friday, July 31st, the general order was given to the troops to prepare for their homeward march to-morrow*, the remains of Lieutenant Beever and the private having first been committed to their prairie graves. How sad the sigh of General Sibley, "It is hard to see these wretches escape from our clutches, but there is no remedy."<sup>1</sup> And there was none! The transportation was exhausted and overcome. The burdensome pontoons had been abandoned on the forced marching. To cross the river in the face of a galling fire was destruction wholly useless. To delay was impossible. Only twelve days' rations were present, and ten days were required to return to Fort Atchison. The expedition *must* move from Camp Braden, to-morrow, Saturday, August 1, 1863. All had been done that human strength and wisdom could do, and to wait longer for General Sully was out of the question. At 5:30 A. M., August 1, 1863, the whole force started on its return.

If anyone concludes, from this itinerary, that an officer so distinguished, and in every way so reliable, as General Sully, was guilty of negligence, or indisposition, the judgment would be as false as the open fact of his absence was true. It is General Sibley himself, who, with characteristic justice and magnanimity, says, "For three successive evenings I caused cannon to be fired and signal rockets sent up, but all these elicited no reply from General Sully, and I am apprehensive he is detained by insurmountable obstacles."<sup>2</sup> It was even so. Not till a week after General Sibley left Camp Pope did General Sully start from Sioux City. The day General Sibley faced for home, August 1, 1863, General Sully was one hundred and sixty miles below him on the Missouri river, and the day he left Fort Atchison, July 20, 1863, with 1,430 infantry, 560 cavalry, besides guns, General Sully left Fort Pierre with 1,200 cavalry, moving, by forced march, to the Big Bend in the Missouri river. Nor was it till August 28th he learned that General Sibley had successfully engaged the Indians. "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will," and it was not written in the

<sup>1</sup> Diary, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Official Report to Major General Pope.

Book of Destiny that, as yet, the Dakotas should utterly perish beneath the upper and nether millstones of this expedition.

The expedition under General Sibley was a triumphant success, notwithstanding the Indians crossed the river. They were compelled to cross. The annals of Indian warfare present no parallel to this campaign, in celerity of movement, economy, care of the lives of the troops, and effective result. Within six weeks' time, or forty-two days, exactly, from June 16th, when the troops left Camp Pope, to July 28th, when the final battle of Stony Lake was fought, General Sibley had marched nearly 600 miles, attaining a point in latitude north,  $46^{\circ} 41'$ , and longitude west,  $100^{\circ} 35'$ , reaching within 30 miles of Devil's lake, then turning southward and westward, pushing the Indians before him, pressed on, with his moccasined men, by forced marches, toward the Missouri coteau and river, fighting the three battles of July 24th, 26th, and 28th, thermometer ranging from ninety-four degrees to one hundred and eight degrees in the shade, and all with casualties of but seven killed and three wounded, while inflicting upon the enemy not only the severe loss of nearly one hundred and fifty killed and wounded, but the destruction of the entire camp of the Sioux, driving from 8,000 to 10,000 Indians, wailing and helpless, across the Missouri river. Achievements like this are rare indeed. The piercing night-cries and lamentations of the squaws, and Indian mothers, told how fearfully the Indians had been punished. With truth, the victor could send the dispatch to Major General Pope, forwarded immediately to Major General Halleck:<sup>1</sup>

AUGUST 7, 1863. — We had three desperate engagements with 2,300 Sioux warriors, in each of which they were routed and finally driven across the Missouri with the loss of all their subsistence. Our loss was small, while at least one hundred and fifty savages were killed and wounded.

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

In his general order, ending the campaign, July 31, 1863, with justifiable pride on the one hand, and devout gratitude on the other, he thanked his noble officers and troops for their fidelity, endurance, and courage, and congratulated them upon the results of the expedition:

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Press, August 15, 1863.



CAMP BRADEN, July 31, 1863.

*To the Officers and Soldiers of the Expeditionary Forces in Camp:*

It is proper for the brigadier general commanding to announce to you that the march to the west and south is completed, and that on to-morrow the column will move homewards, to discharge such other duties connected with the objects of the expedition, on the way, as may from time to time present themselves.

In making this announcement, General Sibley expresses also his high gratification that the campaign has been a complete success. The design of the government in chastising the savages, and thereby preventing, for the future, the raids upon the frontier, has been accomplished. You have routed the miscreants who murdered our people last year, banded, as they were, with the powerful Upper Sioux, to the number of over 2,000 warriors, in three successful engagements, with heavy loss, and driven them, in confusion and dismay, across the Missouri river, leaving behind them all their vehicles, provisions and skins designed for clothing, which have been destroyed. Forty-four bodies of warriors have been found, and many others concealed or taken away, according to the custom of these savages, so that it is certain they lost, in killed and wounded, not less than from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty men. All this has been accomplished with the comparatively trifling loss on our part of three killed and as many wounded. You have marched nearly six hundred miles from St. Paul, and the powerful bands of the Dakotas, who have hitherto held undisputed possession of the great prairies, have succumbed to your valor and discipline, and sought safety in flight. The intense heat and drought have caused much suffering, which you have endured without a murmur. The companies of the Sixth, Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth regiments of Minnesota Volunteers, and of the First regiment Minnesota Mounted Rangers, and the scouts of the battery, have amply sustained the reputation of the state by their bravery and endurance, amidst unknown dangers and great hardships. Each has had the opportunity to distinguish itself against a foe at least equal in numbers to itself.

It would be a gratification if these remorseless savages could have been pursued, and received for their crimes and barbarities such a full measure of punishment as they merited, but men and animals are alike exhausted after so long a march, and a farther pursuit would only be futile and hopeless. The military results of the campaign have been completely accomplished, for the savages have not only been destroyed in great numbers, and their main strength broken, but their prospects for the future are hopeless indeed, for they can scarcely escape starvation during the approaching winter.

It is peculiarly gratifying to the brigadier general commanding to know that the tremendous fatigues and manifold dangers of the expedition, thus far, have entailed so small a loss of life in his command. A less careful policy than that adopted might have effected the destruction of more of the enemy, but that could only have been done by a proportional exposure on our part, and the consequent loss of many more lives, bringing sorrow and mourning to our homes. Let us therefore return thanks to a merciful God



for his manifest interposition in our favor, and for the success attendant upon our efforts to secure peace to the borders of our own state and of our neighbors and friends in Dakota Territory; and, as we proceed on our march toward those most near and dear to us, let us be prepared to discharge other duties which may be imposed upon us during our journey with cheerful and willing hearts.

To the regimental and company officers of his command, the brigadier general commanding tenders his warmest thanks for their co-operation and aid on every occasion during the progress of the column through the heart of an unknown region, inhabited by a subtle and merciless foe.

For the friends and families of our fallen comrades we have our warmest sympathies to offer in their bereavement.

General Sibley takes this occasion to express his appreciation of the activity and zeal displayed by the members of his staff, one and all.

By command of

BRIGADIER GENERAL SIBLEY.

And, thus, with his tender word of "warmest sympathy for the friends and families of our fallen comrades in their bereavement," and his grateful compliments to his staff, the military order closes. How few the generals from whose lips and pens such military words as these, and in such a faultless style, can fall! The giant and the babe are here.

Important to the *whole country*, not less than to the State of Minnesota and Dakota Territory, were the decisive victories achieved by General Sibley, during the last week of July, 1863. As, in September, 1862, when the battle of Birch Coolie was fought, it broke the Indian combination, in the very crisis of the nation's danger, so, in July, 1863, when the battle of Stony Lake was fought, it again broke the greater Indian combination, in the crisis of the nation's second and more alarming danger. Another year of Civil War had gone without a decisive result. Another effort had been zealously made to combine the Indian tribes against the national government. The hour was full of gloom. Lee had invaded Pennsylvania. Morgan had invaded Ohio and Indiana. The Confederate troops were actually in front of Harrisburg. In every state in the Union, every man capable of bearing arms was called out. Roebuck, in the commons, and Palmerston in the lords, with the London "*Times*" thundering away, were urging the British Government to recognize the Southern Confederacy not merely as a belligerent, but as an independent foreign power. The English clergy, the nobility, and the high gentry had openly espoused the Southern cause. Already Mexico had been placed under a French protectorate. The

South had proposed to Louis Napoleon a friendly alliance. The same offer was made to Spain. The Papal Government had already recognized the Confederacy, the only government that ever did so, and now, July, 1863, the nice little scheme of a combined "European protectorate over the South" was suggested. But deliverance came. July 3, 1863, the battle of Gettysburg was fought, and, though the army of Lee escaped across the Potomac, the Confederate power was broken. Then came the surrender of Vicksburg, unchaining the Mississippi, followed by successive triumphs till peace was restored. Not otherwise was it with reference to the state of the Indian question and combination, and the danger awaiting Minnesota. The battle of Stony Lake, fought by Sibley, bore to that question the same relation that the battle of Gettysburg, fought by Meade, bore to the national question. It did more. It had a national relation itself. It affected both North and South, for it shattered the Sioux power, and broke the last secret hope to unite the tribes of the West and Northwest against the national government. Only twenty-four hours stood between Lee's army and annihilation, or total surrender. Only twenty-four hours stood between the Sioux warriors, with their camp of 10,000, and the same fate. If the Potomac, crossed by the defeated foe, did not lessen the value of the action at Gettysburg, so neither did the Missouri, crossed by the vanquished Dakotas, diminish the importance of the victory at Stony Lake. The Sioux outbreak of 1862, renewed in 1863, was no spasmodic *émeute* detached from the vital organism of the Civil War. Notwithstanding the proximate causes that precipitated it, it was part and parcel of the same. And it was the throbbing of a common loyalty in the hearts of two noble soldiers, bound to a common cause, which made Sibley say, "I feel greatly depressed to-day, by the gloomy news of the advance of the rebels," and made Sully snatch his pen in the wilderness and send greetings to Governor Ramsey, for "the charge of the glorious old First regiment of Minnesota at Gettysburg!" The cause was one, and the warm pulsation one, whether in the coteau, or on the bank of the Missouri river, or along the blood-stained valley of the Cumberland.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Note.*—The attitude of the British Government toward the United States in their death-grapple with the Rebellion was unfriendly to the last degree. One circumstance alone, in reference to the Indian War, reveals it. Upon multiplied appeals made to General Sibley, by prominent and numerous subjects of her Majesty residing near Fort Garry in Manitoba,

Whatever diversity of view existed, at first, as to the expedition under General Sibley, the calm reflection of twenty-five years, deepening with time, has sealed but one verdict. In the most triumphant manner, history has crowned his wisdom and skill, in both his campaigns, with the wreath of a consentient and imperishable testimony. "General Sibley," says one who has lived forty years among the Sioux, "deserves great praise for having so conducted this campaign (1863) as to lose so few of his men. Sorrow will come to the hearts of some when the casualties are learned, but these are few compared with what they would have been under a less skillful and careful commander."<sup>1</sup> "If we look at historic facts," says another, "we find no more successful campaigns against the Indians than have been those of General Sibley. All agree that all was done that human wisdom and human energy could do. The name of Henry H. Sibley will live on history's unsullied page. Posterity will laud him when those of his base calumniators will be lost in the great whirlpool of oblivion."<sup>2</sup> At the conclusion of his "address at the reunion of the early settlers of Nicollet county, January 27, 1880," ex-Governor Marshall, who led so valiantly the Seventh regiment in both campaigns, deemed it a pleasure to say, "I cannot close an address on events in which the figure of General H. H. Sibley was so prominent without a few words to testify my great esteem for one, who, take him all in all, is the best

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to pursue the hostile Sioux should they cross into British territory, since no force existed there adequate to protect the settlers, General Sibley made official application to the British Government, through Major General Pope, asking permission to cross the boundary in case the savages should seek refuge on British soil. Secretary Stanton received the letters of appeal, General Sibley's application, and Major General Pope's indorsement, and lodged the same in the hands of Mr. Seward, who addressed a communication to Lord Lyons, the British minister at Washington. Lord Lyons declining to take the responsibility of a decision, transmitted the documents to her Majesty's privy council in London. What the answer was is well known. Great Britain *refused* to allow the sanctity of British soil to be invaded by the armed force of another nationality! Fortunately, as already shown, the large body of the Indians changed their course westward and southward, marching toward the Missouri river. After their three successive defeats, General Sibley received from General Halleck the British answer, with orders not to cross the undefined boundary between the two nations. General Sibley, commenting in his notes on this transaction, says: "The order of Halleck would have reached me *too late*, had the hostiles sought refuge in Manitoba, and I would doubtless have been made a scape-goat to appease the wrath of the English people, for having *desecrated British soil*, even at the repeated solicitations of their own kith and kin, for protection from the hordes of savage warriors. The attitude of the British ministry in thus rejecting the offer of a friendly power to shield their own sparse settlements from depredation and outrage, in a critical conjuncture, and without cost to their own government, seems to me the acme of absurdity, savoring of ill will to our nation, and of the worst features of old-fogyism."

1 Rev. S. R. Riggs, D.D., in St. Paul Daily Press, August 15, 1863.

2 Dakota War-Whoop, by H. E. B. McConkey, p. 377.

and noblest of men I have ever known. I do not know how there can be any divided opinion in regard to his campaigns. If there is, I have here the judgment of one who is competent to speak. It is the judgment of Major General Curtis of the Regular Army, made to the United States Senate's Committee on Indian Affairs, in reply to questions touching military operations against hostile Indians. "I have been in command in the field up the Arkansas river, and, elsewhere in operations against the hostile bands, and I am conversant with all other movements under different commanders in the same direction, and I am frank to say that, in my judgment, *no such important or effective blows have ever been struck upon the savages of the frontier as those inflicted by the Minnesota troops under the command of General Sibley in his campaigns of 1862 and 1863.*"<sup>1</sup>

In presence of such testimonials as these, which place General Sibley in the front rank of Indian commanders, silence becomes a civilian even as a salute becomes a soldier. To add words here is to "carry coals to Newcastle" and "owls to Athens."

There are some things connected with the expedition of 1863 which ought not, in any account of it, to be withheld from the public, and others the sanctity of which will not be invaded by revealing to the state the burden of agony General Sibley was called upon to bear, in addition to the load of military responsibility, and the assaults of detraction, when entering on, and while conducting, the same. It is worthy of special notice that, as a commander, he, first of all, forbade

<sup>1</sup> St. Peter Tribune, Wednesday, January 28, 1880.

The testimony of the Hon. E. M. Stanton, secretary of war, is no less conclusive. After General Sibley was detailed as a member of the national civil and military commission to negotiate treaties with the Indians on the Upper Missouri, he visited Washington, by order of the war department, to report to the secretary of the interior, and, with Major General Curtis, called on Mr. Stanton. When entering the office, crowded with military men, and others, the usher called out their names. Mr. Stanton, though pressed with important business, immediately left his desk, at the other end of the room, and, hastening to the door, shook hands with General Curtis, who introduced General Sibley to the great war secretary. Seizing General Sibley, with both hands, Mr. Stanton said, "General Sibley, I have never had the pleasure of meeting you before, but I am happy to see you, to assure you that this government is under great obligations to you for the eminent and important service you have rendered, and with such economy and regard for human life, while commanding the military district of Minnesota." General Sibley bowed gracefully, and, expressing his thanks for the compliment paid him, retired. As the two visitors were leaving the room, General Curtis remarked to General Sibley, "General, I have known Stanton for many years and have had many conferences with him on military matters, but I never heard him utter any such compliment to any civilian or military officer as he has paid you to-day." Whoever knows the austere, unbending, and adamant character of the "Iron Secretary of War" will be able to appreciate the value of this incident. It shows what estimate the authorities at Washington placed upon General Sibley's military merit.

the sale of intoxicating liquor to the troops, "an order that remained in force during the whole time of the expedition."<sup>1</sup> On one occasion he broke up the sutler's store rather than suffer it. Also, by an order issued and published to the camp, June 21, 1863, the first Sunday of the expedition, the observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest from all unnecessary military duty, was enforced, and throughout the campaign this order was observed. "We shall march farther," said he, "week after week, by resting on God's day, than we should by marching through the seven. But there is a higher view of this subject. If God be not with us, we shall fail of accomplishing the desired objects, and one way to secure the presence and assistance of God is to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." "On the Sabbath day the standard rested from its march."<sup>2</sup> It was a repetition of the order in the camp of Moses in the wilderness. Twelve Sundays covered the sacred calendar of the expedition, from Sunday, June 21, to Sunday, September 6, 1863. How conscientiously the day was kept is attested, everywhere, in the diary of the commander: "Sunday, June 21st.—Remained in camp to-day." "June 28th, Sunday.—Ordered back the stragglers, outside, into camp." "July 5th, Sunday.—I have issued a general order enjoining greater vigilance on the part of my officers, and regularity as to the Sunday order in the camp." "July 12th, Sunday.—Went to hear Chaplain Light of the Seventh regiment. His allusions to home and its sweet associations touched me profoundly, as they brought vividly to my mind how great the recent loss in our dear little flock at my home, and the uncertainty of Frank's recovery." "July 26th, Sunday.—Alarm of Indians. Formed a line of skirmishers. Nine killed. Over six hundred Indians appeared." "August 2d, Sunday.—I dislike to travel or otherwise violate the sanctity of the Lord's day, but I deem it to be my duty to march to-day." "August 8th, Saturday.—If sufficient can be obtained for the stock, I shall not travel to-morrow, it being Sunday." "August 9th, Sunday.—Remained in camp. Went to hear Chaplain Lothrop. His allusion to home, and finding our loved ones we left there, reminded me painfully of the ravages made by death in my little flock." "August 16th, Sunday.—Invited Rev. Mr. Riggs to preach. Suffered much

<sup>1</sup> Dakota War-Whoop, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 337.

from pain in my knee, and from dizziness." "August 23d, Sunday.—In camp. Commission appointed to try the Indian prisoners now with us." "August 30th, Sunday.—Remained in camp. Chaplain Bull arrives with letters from Sarah, of twenty-third and twenty-sixth."<sup>1</sup> "September 6th, Sunday.—Remained in camp. Bishop Whipple to preach at half-past ten o'clock. Governor Ramsey, however, left this morning." And so the record runs.

The deep personal sorrow and unspeakable bereavement to which allusion is made already, and under whose wellnigh insupportable pain and weight, General Sibley served his state and country, was the death of two dear children, during his absence in the field, and the thought of home and its irreparable desolation. Even before the order to march from Camp Pope was given, the blow had fallen. "June 13, 1863.—Colonel Miller informs me by letter of the *death of my dear little lamb-like Mamie*. God enable her parents to bear this overwhelming blow with becoming fortitude! How dear to us this gentle child was, he alone knows who alone can tell how terrible is the blow I have received! God bless my poor wife and enable her to bear up under the fearful bereavement!" It is the commander who is first struck by bereavement. He may not return, even for a moment, to mingle his tears with the heart-crushed wife of his bosom, who sits, clouded, lonely, and gloomed, by the coffin of her child. "*Forward!*" It is the bugle call! Grief must be smothered and home forgotten! "*Forward!*" What a preliminary lesson, what a preparation for military service where, soon, other hearts must wail in unutterable grief! Was it an aimless dispensation, an instructionless calamity? Calumny herself might have held her tongue till the brave man's pain was assuaged and his tears were dried! His "little lamb-like Mamie," though dead, still lived in the quenchless love of a father's heart. But more sorrow was in store. Billow follows billow. God's waves roll high and fast. "July 19th.—Remained in camp. Sunday. Messengers from Abercrombie brought letters for me, and the *Press* of the eighth, announcing the *death of my son Frank*." This was at Fort Atchison, and the day preceding the start on the final week of forced marching and fighting. The strong man is bowed to the earth, struck by wounds God only can heal, and

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<sup>1</sup> General Sibley had not received a letter from his sorrowing wife "for forty days!"—*Diary*, p. 102.



moaning a double grief God only can assuage. It is midnight. He is alone in his tent. "O my God, why hast thou thus doubly afflicted thy servants? If for our sins, awful has been thy chastisement upon us! *Poor dear Frank and Mamie!* Shall I see you no more on earth? Dreadful thought! Even the hope of again meeting my beloved wife and remaining children becomes more faint and less cheering as I think how our home has been devastated by death within a few short weeks. God give my dear wife and myself strength sufficient to bear up under this second stroke!" Perpetually, throughout his diary, this inconsolable bereavement asserts its claims. The moan breaks through the tent, floats over the prairie, mingles with the storm, and even blends its sad note with the din and fury of battle. "Poor departed Frank and Mamie! Shall I fail to meet your smiling and familiar faces and your loving welcome when I reach home? My poor wife's sorrow affects me deeply. How fearfully have we been visited by Providence? How shall I feel, if permitted to return, to find my family scattered without a home, and two of my dear children in their graves?" How little the State of Minnesota, secure from harm, and enjoying gladness, knew of these recorded midnight agonies!

He *dreams!* "Camp Kennedy, August 3, 1863.—Tuesday. I had distressing dreams, last night, of Indians attacking the camp in overwhelming numbers, and that I could not give the alarm. Then I dreamed of having arrived at Belle Plaine, and found Mrs. Potts there. I expressed surprise at her leaving St. Paul, when, suddenly, Sarah<sup>1</sup> came into the room, looking very smilingly and pleasant. I was astonished and delighted to see her, but when I wished to approach her, to embrace her, she evaded me with a coquettish air, and would not come near me. *I asked her if she had brought the children with her, and she said not!* She had come to meet me, *alone!* These things brought back, vividly, upon awaking, the thoughts of my poor departed Frank and Mamie.<sup>2</sup> Surely

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sibley.

<sup>2</sup> This reminds us of a similar experience, sadly as beautifully told by the poet:

"To my fancied sight,  
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined  
So clear, as in no face with more delight.  
But oh' as to embrace her I inclined,  
She fled; I waked; and day brought back my night."

—Milton.

The last words of his son Frank were, "*Tell papa to meet me in Heaven.*"



my return home will be a sorrowful one!" Everywhere these agonies are reproduced in the heart of the sufferer. July 1st, 5th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 13th, 19th, 20th, 30th, 31st, August 3d, 5th, 24th, September 6th, bore witness how deeply had sunk into his soul the dark-mantled sorrow that came to be his companion as he started from Camp Pope, mated by another, in the midst of his march; both death angels escorting him to his desolated home!

Nor were his thoughts confined to himself and his household. He loved his country and his state, next to his home. He longed for peace and not war. "July 10th.—I spent the day in coopering barrels of hard bread for our expedition. We march at 4 A. M. I feel much depressed to-day, not only by my private griefs but by the gloomy news of the advance of the rebels." "August 18th, Camp Ambler.—Exhausted. This is the *anniversary of the Sioux outbreak and massacre of 1862*. What changes have occurred within one year! Hundreds of people massacred, or their homes broken up. The Indians severely chastised at Wood Lake. Many hung, or confined in prison. Campaign of this year about to close with a degree of success almost marvelous. Thank God! The Southern forces are being pushed to the wall, and apparently cannot much longer resist. O for peace and unity, once more, in our beloved country! God grant wisdom to its rulers to guide the nation in this fearful crisis of its fate. *Poor dear Mamie and dear Frank!* How changed I am in body and mind! *I thank God for the strength given me, though so deeply afflicted, to do my whole duty as leader of the expedition.*"<sup>1</sup>

Has any state ever had a man of whom it might be more proud? How loving a husband! How tender a father! How incorruptible in public life! How successful a soldier and commander! In his person were combined justice to man, reverence for God, the sentiment of religion, the admiration of virtue, the strength of personal affection, dependence on an overruling Providence, love of country, fidelity, integrity, truth, endurance, and self-sacrifice,—a bright-set constellation of breast-worn honors, outdazzling all the star-and-gartered titles of nobility; an ornament of character more costly than the diadems of kings, more lustrous than the gems that Aaron wore. Mediocrity, hate, jealousy, calumny, and death, all love a "shining mark!"

<sup>1</sup> Diary, p. 102.

The march homeward from Camp Slaughter to St. Paul and Fort Snelling was ably conducted, special detachments being sent out, right and left, to scour the country, and clear it of all straggling Indian parties. August 8th, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, with ten scouts and others, started at 5 A. M. from Camp Carter, to speed his way to St. Paul, four hundred miles distant, as bearer of dispatches. August 10th, Fort Atchison was reached. August 13th, the river Cheyenne was recrossed at the same spot as when on the outbound march. August 21st found the expedition at Fort Abercrombie, and, by September 4th, it came to Camp Austin, where General Sibley "met Bishop Whipple, Governor Ramsey, B. Thompson, Davis, and others." September 7th, Camp Taylor on Sauk river, two and one-half miles from St. Cloud, was reached, "where the ladies came out to see the General and were introduced." Finally, September 8th, at 4:30 P. M., General Sibley arrived at St. Paul, his command having been transferred by him to the care of Lieutenant Colonel Averill, under whom it entered Fort Snelling, September 13, 1863. The time occupied in the return was one month and twelve days.

The whole period of General Sibley's absence, in command of the expeditions, was two months, two weeks, and four days, having traveled, since starting, 1,170, or nearly 1,200, miles, according to Colonel Crooks' computation, or 1,039½, according to General Sibley's computation. Or, if we combine the main features and results of the two campaigns of 1862 and 1863, then the total time consumed until the final battles were fought was two months, two weeks, six days, nearly 500 warriors captured, of whom 425 were tried, 321 convicted, 303 condemned to be hanged, 38 executed, 1,800 prisoners sent to Fort Snelling in two shipments, 2,000 exiled from the state, from 8,000 to 10,000 driven across the Missouri, the entire camp of the Sioux destroyed, and over 100 vehicles of all kinds burned, the Sioux annuities forfeited, their treaties abrogated, five sharp and important battles fought, with a loss to the enemy of over 300 killed and wounded, and of casualties to the force under General Sibley of 54 killed and 98 wounded, the total distance traveled, from the beginning to the close of both campaigns, being nearly 1,500 miles, the frontier settlements made secure forever, against hostile incursions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To this final result General Sully also contributed. After General Sibley's return, the Sioux recrossed the Missouri to their old hunting grounds in Dakota. In August General

It is for the country and posterity to consider the moral effect of these victories and chastisements over and upon the Sioux Nation. They taught this warlike people, who deemed themselves the unconquerable masters of the territory, as they were in fact the terror of the plains, and of other tribes, that the strong arm of the government could reach them, and that their fancied immunity from punishment was a dream. It is also for the country and posterity to compare Sibley in the halls of Congress defending the red man's right, with Sibley on the field of battle visiting the red man's wrong. No inconsistency is here. The faithful voice uplifted in the house of representatives, to warn the government against the coming wrath, was entitled on the cotéau of Missouri to give the order to fire upon the Indian. Circumstances alter cases, and the soldier here was no less honorable than was the statesman valiant there. From first to last, the conflict between the Indian and the white man has been that of race and acquisition. And the great problem involved is as little to be solved by the sword on the one hand, as by legislation on the other. In either case, the issues sought, viz., peace, concord, and amity, are to be gained only by "the rule that makes for righteousness." The folly of the state may provoke massacre and murder, robbery and arson, and atrocities untold, which the sword of the state is bound to avenge. The madness of the nation, bent on conquest, and spurred by avarice, injustice, and cruelty, may crush to the earth the inalienable rights of man, belie its own "declaration" of the same, and force an arbitrament by blood. But a final decision, short of "extermination" of the weaker by the stronger, can never be effected. The sword and violated faith may secure a temporary truce, only to be followed by a new revenge and a re-enacted scene of horror. Japhet, resting on an oracle that ordains him to possession in the tents of Shem, may justify himself with the *dictum* that "an inferior must yield to a superior race," proclaim "God's law of eternal progress" and teach that a divine decree excuses from

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Sully chastised them severely, at the headwaters of the James river, and again in September, five hundred miles north of Fort Pierre, at the battle of White Stone Hills. Their loss was over 200 killed and wounded, with 185 taken prisoners. General Sully's loss was 21 killed and 30 wounded. Between Generals Sibley and Sully over 500 Indians were killed and wounded, and nearly 2,500 taken prisoners, their camps and entire subsistence twice entirely destroyed. The blow was a fearful and remediless one. The massacre of 1862 was awfully avenged.

the human guilt by which it is accomplished.<sup>1</sup> But "right is right as God is God," and no enduring foundation of national prosperity, or security from judgment, can ever be laid strong enough to avert divine displeasure, or resist the assaults of time, save that of righteousness;—that "*jus*" which a Roman orator assures us is the "*fundamentum societatis*" and the "*monumentum gloriæ*" for any people. "Dead for want of righteousness" is the epitaph on the tombstone of every extinct empire. And, as to the sad discipline of life, through which, in the discharge of duty, all must pass, and the home sanctities and loves that death so rudely invades, the awaiting splendor of the end will more than compensate for the anguish of the way. To us, short-sighted as we are, the future still stands veiled. But love and sorrow, more than gladness, transfigure the forms of our dear departed ones with a beauty time cannot change, and perpetuate an affection safe forever from disruption. In the magic of that mirror, we behold what to the eye of sense is unseen, and learn the fact that

"To death it is given

To show how this world is embosomed in heaven."<sup>2</sup>

If, in coming years, the trumpet shall again sound to arms, and soldiers of Minnesota march to its note, in the inner history of General Sibley's campaigns they will find support in their bereavement and an example of heroic fortitude in suffering, worthy of a Regulus, and of virtue equal to that of a Cimon or Timoleon.

Were it not that various writers, in their discussions of the "Indian problem," have indulged in a strain of remark discouraged by every Christian sentiment, and openly advocated the philosophy of "extermination" as its only effective solution, we might dismiss this part of our work without further protraction. But justice and truth alike claim to be heard in a matter of such importance not less to the nation than to the Indian himself. Especially now, even in our own time (1889), after such sad experience, and in view of negotiations now pending to open the Sioux reservation in Dakota, for the sake of railroads and civilization, is this claim imperative.<sup>2</sup> It is

<sup>1</sup> Bryant's *Indian Massacre*, p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> The efforts made of late to open up, peacefully if possible, the great Sioux Reservation in Dakota, to railroads and the influx of white population, have at length proved successful. August 5, 1889, after a long struggle, all the Sioux chiefs, save Sitting Bull, surrendered to the means and arts made use of to persuade them to sign the new treaty, and accept what

largely asserted that the civilization of savage tribes, in contact with a race superior to themselves in mental and physical endowment, is a "wild dream of the imagination," a "vain scheme of philanthropy" impossible of realization, a "failure in every case," and that "God's written law of progress" dooms to extinction the tribes that refuse to submit to the white man's modes of life and forms of social existence. It may, at once, be replied that whatever *man's* law of progress may be, *God's* law of progress is not one of injustice and crime. What the causes of failure to civilize the red man are, seems matter for silence, perhaps for the reason that the same would be equally strong in the case of the white man himself under similar circumstances. Every way in which it can be taken, the theory is incorrect, and the sentiment to be deplored. It is repelled by the best ethnologists. It is simply an assertion that, unless the red man submits to the civilization of the white man, such as he sees it, and feels it, and knows it, to be, he is proper game for the government, and a proper target for the immigrant. These are the plain alternatives. It is an argument that mocks every appeal against the permission of wrong to the noblest precedents of history, and the better genius of our American institutions; a palpable inconsistency and a self-convicting folly. By such reasoning, the negro races abroad were first condemned to a curse eternal, not limited by advancing Christianity, nor meliorated by the sentiment of a common brotherhood. It was taught that the perpetual chattel bondage of the black man was a divine decree, and the African slave trade—held by all nations to be "piracy on the high seas"—was a "benignant system of emigration," and, withal, a "providential missionary enterprise." A similar shibboleth was that of mediæval Christendom which rang "anathema" over the

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the government offered, per acre, for their lands. Chief Gall, who was field general of the Indians in the Custer campaign, John Grass, and others of prominence, affixed their names to the treaty, and, the requisite number of signatures having been obtained, the treaty is closed, and 11,000,000 of acres of land have now become the property of the government, and are thrown open to the inflowing immigration. The Indian chiefs resisted until they became satisfied that the government "could take the land for nothing if it wanted to," then consented to sign. In the words of Gall, speaking regretfully, after he had yielded, "The whites have now got our lands, and I hope they will be satisfied, and let us live in peace in the future." John Grass, long opposing, at last consented, suddenly, professing a desire to favor the civilization of the Indians. Sitting Bull was obstinate to the last, saying, "Don't talk to me about Indians. There are no Indians left. Excepting my band of Uncapapas they are all dead, and those wearing the clothing of warriors are only squaws. I am sorry for my followers who have been defeated, and their lands taken from them."—St. Paul Daily Globe, August 6, 1889.

heads of the Jews, expelled them from every Christian nation under heaven, and whelmed them, men, women, and children together, 20,000 at a time, in the Mediterranean sea, because refusing to adopt "*our*" Christianity, and "*our*" civilization. In like strain, erudite men, glorifying civilization as a transformed tribal existence, some ancient lines of it still lingering among us, in the marriage relation, and belief in a future state, ventilate the doctrine that no sanctity attaches to the immemorial rights, life, and wigwam, of the red man, nor to the person of his wife or squaw, forgetful of the fact that our Aryan forefathers were savages as cruel as were ever Camanches, Ojibwas, or Dakotas, who sport the eagle-plume and the scalping knife, or worship the old ancestral totem. The better mind revolts from this whole philosophy of extermination. The fresh-made robe of "*our*" civilization will not be instantly donned by men through whose blood oriental sunlight streams. History, moreover, is the constant record of all physical, intellectual, moral, religious, political, social, civil, and material progress, and he is a superficial reader who has not yet learned that the course of every nation that has a history has been from barbarism, through painfully slow and various degrees, to a better condition. "Savage tribes may remain long unimproved, but let the more civilized nations come in contact with them, and they soon learn such arts as conduce to their gradual improvement, together with such practices and indulgences as injure rather than profit them. Even while copying the crimes and vices of the superior race, they step forward out of their savage environment. The appliances of education, the extension of law over them, assistance, kindness, justice, and truth, elevate them and prepare them for a higher history than ever before enjoyed." A champion of this doctrine was General Sibley himself.

On the other hand, history tells the mournful story of civilized nations, cursed by their love of conquest, wealth, luxury, and deepening destruction, falling back, with a rapid step, from a high degree of perfection, before their less civilized, and even barbarous, invaders. So Greece fell before the arms of Rome, as did Rome, in her turn, before German, Scythian, and African hordes. A prophet of Israel foretold the rise of that empire, the mightiest the world has known, from the outcast barbarous tribes of Latium, stretching its wide dominion to the walls of Babylon and the banks of the Tigris.



Not less did his glance foresee the unsuspected decay and fall of the same empire, sapped by its own corruptions, a prey to still other barbarian hordes, avenging a thirst for dominion marked by successive wars, not in defense of the empire, but for enlargement of power and possession already too great. The judgments of Heaven are a part of "God's law of progress" to punish the crimes of "man's law of progress;" and, to carry the account of man's crimes over to the credit of God's law, in the name of Christian civilization, is not only a very unstatesmanlike thing, but it is an infidel theory of human progress which postulates the vindication of man at the expense of the condemnation of God. It is not true that the race inferior in civilization must yield to the race superior. Barbarians conquered both Greece and Rome, the two most civilized of all the nations of antiquity. "God's law of eternal progress" is something more than a Spanish bull-fight. It is a moral law which, as Matthew Arnold says, "makes for righteousness," a "moral order of the universe," as Fichte called it, and reveals itself by judgment no less than by blessing. He gives to barbarous tribes the abused favors he dispensed to the civilized nations smitten before them. Goth, Vandal, and Hun, learned all that Rome could bestow, even as Rome sat at the feet of Greece to study philosophy, science, and art. While barbarism has become civilized, civilization has become barbarized. The Indian becomes a Christian and ceases to scalp. The Christian becomes a savage, scalps, pays bounty for scalps, and treasures his trophies of shame in places of public resort. In a community nursing the pleasure of such things, Religion can have no power, and Truth no place. Humanity becomes inhuman, Progress is turned back, Civilization is ashamed, Faith scarcely can lift up her eyes, and Hope seems quenched in rayless night. Hard-hearted Mammon, degrading Mammon alone, will rule, and Conscience and God go to the ditch. The doctrine of extermination is that of the Black Flag, of Ghorkas, and Bashi-Bazouks, the doctrine of cruelty, lies, injustice, perjury, perfidy, fraud, and brute force, as the measure of right between man and man. It was the maxim of blood-stained Rome,—"*Spare the submissive, destroy the resisting,*"—a maxim whereby it became necessary, in every quarrel, to conquer or perish, and, by these alternatives, bind the empire either to die or subdue mankind. No state has a right to make the submission of men, outside its lawful juris-



diction, a necessary condition of their preservation. The doctrine that "*Might makes right*" annihilates the possibility of a moral judgment on nations, the vindication of national chastisement, and sets the Most High, as a Moral Governor, in flat contradiction with himself. Competent statesmen will not accept it as "God's law of eternal progress." A Pitt, Sheridan, and Fox flamed against it. A Webster, Choate, Sumner, and Wilberforce publicly denounced it. A race is not to be exterminated because its capital criminals deserve such a fate, nor is the Indian a "Canaanite" doomed to extinction by a divine command. When Christian brutality, worse than Indian savagery, and civilized mammon and lust, disappear, some hope will remain for "*our*" civilization, and the red man, one day, will adorn the bench of justice, and stand erect in the halls of Congress. The effective bond of all progress is not the "*parcere subjectis, debellare rebellatis*," but the common implanted feeling of humanity, the "*Homo sum*" that recognizes a kinship in all nations of men God has made to dwell on all the face of the earth, appointing their bounds and times, and the disregard of which is the death of all those nobler sentiments which lift their voices to tell the Fatherhood of God, and extend their hands to build the brotherhood of man. And the quicker our "American Christian civilization" ceases to be a system of national freebootery and blood-curdling cruelty toward the Indians, the better it will be.

Little here need be said of Little Crow. He was the eldest-born son of Little Crow, Sr., chief of the Kaposia band, adjacent to St. Paul, and hereditary successor to his father's chieftainship. Instructed by his dying father to accommodate himself to the new system of things, assume the habits of civilized life, abstain from war with the whites who were determined to have the land, and against whom it was useless to contend, as also to live a sober life, and by honest industry provide for himself and his tribe, he yet disregarded these dying admonitions. A few miles north of Hutchinson, while picking berries near one of the Scattered Lakes, July 3, 1862, — the day General Sibley was near Ink-pah at the Coteau de Prairie, not far from the bend of the Cheyenne river, — he was shot dead by Mr. Chauncy Lampson, unconscious that it was "*Ta-wai-o-ta-doo-tah*" his rifle-ball had pierced. No better, briefer, or more comprehensive description of his character can be given than that furnished by General Sibley to the

Minnesota Historical Society. "Little Crow, Jr., soon forgot the parting injunctions of his father. He was a drunkard, a confirmed liar, and possessed of very few redeeming qualities; a man of great energy and determination. He was the leading spirit of the pagan Indians, bitterly opposing all changes of dress and habits of life. He was no friend to missionary operations but clung to the superstitious observances of his fathers. The latter part of his life is known to most of you. He encouraged the Indians in the prosecution of their bloody work in 1862, was the acknowledged head of the war party, and, finally, in 1863, while engaged with a small band in a raid upon our frontiers, was shot dead by a Mr. Lampson, his son who was with him only escaping to fall into the hands of a detachment of the troops under my command near Devil's lake, a few weeks later. It is my conviction that no outbreak would have occurred, had either Wabashaw, or Little Crow, Sr., been living at the time."<sup>1</sup> His scalp and arm-bones, not to the credit of "Christian civilization," or the "culture" of the "superior race," are trophied in the shelves of the State Historical Society, in the capitol, for the satisfaction of the curiosity, and the peculiar inspiration, of all beholders. All that is redeeming in humanity protests against the acquisition; a spectacle which can only feed the temper of a barbarous mind and excite the moral disgust of every man, unblunted by a spirit of revenge. The perpetual exhibition of such relics, in a state capitol on whose dome the figure of Justice, with her scales,—weighing not less the white man's crimes than the red man's wrongs,—seems to hold an even account, is disgraceful to "Christian civilization." For the sake of Ma-ya-ku-ta-ma-ne, Ta-o-pee, and Wa-ke-wan-wa, if not for Minne-sota, let these relics be removed!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coll. Minn. State Hist. Society, Vol. III, pp. 253, 254.

<sup>2</sup> It remains as a stain in American "Christian history," that the government of Massachusetts offered large bounties for Indian scalps, that Minnesota offered \$25, \$75, and \$200 under the adjutant general's order, "for every Sioux scalp," and that the United States offered \$200 for "every Seminole scalp," taken in the Seminole War. Special inducements were also offered, in Minnesota, to scour the Big Woods, and "lay the trophies at the feet of the Historical Society," scalps, bones, and trinkets made out of bones of human beings! The first scalp taken by a white man under the \$25 offer, in Minnesota, was that of *Little Crow*. (Dakota War-Whoop, p. 319.) It seems certain that General Sibley, although his heart was "steeled" against the criminals of 1862, could not approve of the scalp and arm-bone use of Little Crow, the "trophy" that now sits on the shelf of the State Historical Library. When learning that his own troops had scalped the dead, he issued a sharp military order forbidding it, and exclaimed, "Shame upon such brutality! God's image should not be thus mutilated and disfigured!"—Diary, p. 69.

## CHAPTER X.

**GENERAL SIBLEY'S POST-MILITARY CAREER.—MULTIPLIED HONORS AND OFFICES OF TRUST.—CONFIRMATION OF HIS RANK AS BRIGADIER GENERAL, UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS.—HIGH COMMENDATIONS FROM EMINENT SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS.—BREVETTED MAJOR GENERAL, UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS.—NOT MUSTERED OUT OF MILITARY SERVICE TILL 1886.—MIXED CIVIL AND MILITARY COMMISSION TO NEGOTIATE INDIAN TREATIES, AT COUNCIL BLUFFS AND SIOUX CITY.—ANOTHER SIMILAR COMMISSION.—GENERAL SIBLEY, PRESIDENT GAS COMPANY, PRESIDENT MINNESOTA MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE, PRESIDENT ST. PAUL CITY BANK, PRESIDENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, RESIGNATION OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CHAMBER, PRESIDENT BOARD OF REGENTS OF STATE UNIVERSITY.**

**STATE BONDS AGAIN.—PERPLEXING FACTOR IN STATE POLITICS.—RESUMÉ OF THE SITUATION.—MISREPRESENTATIONS.—REPUDIATION.—DEFENSE OF REPUDIATION.—DEMORALIZATION OF THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE.—MAGNIFICENT RESISTANCE TO THIS BY GENERAL SIBLEY.—GOVERNOR MARSHALL.—FIRST SCHEME FOR LIQUIDATION.—POLITICIANS AND THE HONOR OF THE STATE.—LIGHTNING FROM GENERAL SIBLEY.—HE APPEALS TO THE CHURCHES AND THE PULPIT.—BURNING WORDS.—JUSTICE CURTIS.—HON. W. M. EVARTS.—ATTORNEY GENERAL.—GOVERNOR AUSTIN.—EVASIVE SCHEME OF SUBMITTING LEGISLATIVE ACTS TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAD ALREADY REPUDIATED.—GENERAL SIBLEY ELECTED TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE, OCTOBER, 1870.—HIS RESOLUTION INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 4, 1871.—HIS GREAT SPEECH ON THE BOND QUESTION, FEBRUARY 8, 1871, IS COPIED IN THE EASTERN PAPERS.—SEVENTEEN PRESIDENTS OF DIFFERENT NEW YORK CITY BANKS, AND THIRTY LEADING FIRMS, SEND LETTERS OF CONGRATULATION AND THANKS.—STATE LEGISLATURE MOVED TO ACTION.—GOVERNOR C. K. DAVIS AND GOVERNOR PILLSBURY ON REPUDIATION.—JUDGE DILLON ON THE VALIDITY OF THE BONDS.—SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.—DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.—ATTITUDE OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PARTIES TOWARD THIS QUESTION IN 1881.—DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTION.—THE PLATFORM.—REMARKS BY GENERAL R. W. JOHNSON, THE NOMINEE.—REMARKS BY HON. EUGENE M. WILSON.—THE EXTRA REPUBLICAN LEGISLATURE.—FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE BOND QUESTION.—REFLECTIONS ON THE MORAL CHARACTER OF A STATE.—MUST HAVE A CONSCIENCE.—IS A PUBLIC PERSON.—NAMES TO BE REMEMBERED.—ANCIENT AND MODERN ETHICS.—THE GOVERNMENT OF A STATE.—POPULAR CORRUPTION.—INDIVIDUAL FIDELITY.—GENERAL SIBLEY'S EXAMPLE.—RETIRES FROM POLITICAL LIFE.**

**GENERAL SIBLEY AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN.—ACCUMULATION OF HONORS AND TRUSTS.—PRESIDENT OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS.—COMMISSION TO SUPERVISE THE WHOLE INDIAN DEPARTMENT.—**

FELLOW OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.—NOMINATED AGAIN FOR CONGRESS.—RETAINED AS PRESIDENT OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY.—PRESIDENT OAKLAND CEMETERY ASSOCIATION.—ADDRESS BEFORE THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.—COMMISSION TO SETTLE CHIPPEWA CLAIMS.—PRESIDES AT BI-CENTENNARY CELEBRATION OF DISCOVERY OF FALLS OF ST. ANTHONY.—PRESIDES AT INAUGURAL BANQUET TO GOVERNOR HUBBARD.—PRESIDENT MINNESOTA CLUB.—LECTURE BEFORE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.—EULOGY ON GENERAL GRANT; FUNERAL SERVICES.—SEMI-CENTENNIAL OF GENERAL SIBLEY'S ADVENT TO MINNESOTA.—BANQUET.—QUARTER-CENTENNIAL OF BATTLE OF BIRCH COOLIE.—BANQUET.—ELECTED AND INSTALLED COMMANDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION.—BANQUET.—ELECTED MEMBER OF THE PRINCETON PHILOSOPHIC SOCIETY.—HONORARY DEGREE OF "DOCTOR OF LAWS" CONFERRED.—CORRESPONDENCE AND CONGRATULATIONS.—THE DIPLOMA.—UTTERANCES OF THE PUBLIC PRESS.—RESOLUTION BY THE UNIVERSITY.—UNTARNISHED HONORS.

GENERAL SIBLEY'S relief from the arduous labors to which he had been called in defense of the state, during his military career, brought with it a more tranquil and domestic life, yet none the less active in national, state, and municipal affairs. The city of St. Paul, as we have seen, was his permanent home, where, since 1862, he resided amid the companionship of his friends. Public places and stations of responsibility ever waited to welcome him. His experience, energy, enterprise, and large influence, and social standing as well, conspired to invite him to honors and burdens more frequent than usually fall to the lot of men. As already stated, the confirmation of the appointment, twice made by the president, of General Sibley as brigadier general, for meritorious service in the field, was unavoidably delayed by reason of the action of Congress reducing the number of such officers, notwithstanding which, however, General Sibley, having accepted the honor thus twice conferred, continued in the field acting as a general officer, and, recognized as such by the government, accomplished his second military campaign with the signal success narrated. For a time, adverse circumstances contributed to prevent the confirmation of the appointment. On motion of Charles Sumner, misled and deceived in his action by men of his own party, it was laid on the table. The action, however, of the Minnesota legislature, and of the citizens of the state, as also the high commendation by Major General Pope, smote this disreputable effort of certain politicians, and availed to undeceive, at Washington, many whose minds had unjustly been prejudiced. To the credit of the

Hon. Charles Sumner's manhood and sense of justice, when informed by Senator Ramsey, who had just been elected and taken his seat, of what General Sibley had done, and how unmerited was the effort to defeat the confirmation of his appointment, he returned to the senate, and, explaining his error, while emphasizing the distinguished services of General Sibley, on motion the appointment was taken up from the table by the senate, and unanimously confirmed. March 26, 1864, the formal commission of General Sibley as brigadier general was made out, his reaffirmed rank being *retroactively dated from March 20, 1863*, thus covering, by second appointment, not only his second campaign but the whole time since the "more than fifty leading business firms of St. Paul" besought him, by open letter, not to retire from the field, March 19, 1863. The official announcement of this was telegraphed from Washington, by General-in-Chief Halleck to Major General Pope, under date of March 23, 1863, the date of General Sibley's reply to the business firms just mentioned.<sup>1</sup> The parchment that bears the commission reads as follows:

*The President of the United States of America to all who shall see these presents, greeting:*

Know ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities of Henry H. Sibley, I have nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the senate, do appoint him brigadier general of volunteers in the service of the United States, *to rank as such from the twentieth day of March, eighteen hundred and sixty-three*. He is, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of brigadier general by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging.

And I do strictly charge, and require, all officers and soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as brigadier general; and he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future president of the United States of America, or the general, or other superior officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of war. This commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the president of the United States for the time being.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, this twenty-sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, and in the eighty-eighth year of the independence of the United States.

By the President.

(Signed,) ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

(Signed,) EDWIN M. STANTON,

*Secretary of War.*

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<sup>1</sup> Rebellion Records, Series I, Vol. XXII, Part II, 176; Coll. Minn. Hist. Soc., Vol. III, Part II, 281.

The official transmission of the same was made under date of April 28, 1864, as follows:

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
WASHINGTON, April 28, 1864.

SIR: I forward herewith your commission of brigadier general, your receipt and acceptance of which you will please acknowledge without delay, reporting at the same time your age and residence when appointed, the state where born, and your full name, correctly written. Fill up, subscribe, and return as soon as possible, the accompanying oath, duly and carefully executed. I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

S. F. CHALFIN,  
*Assistant Adjutant General.*

*Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley, United States Volunteers, St. Paul, Minn.*

The acknowledgment of the receipt of the commission was made ten days thereafter.

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
ST. PAUL, May 9, 1864.

*Brigadier General L. Thomas, Adjutant General United States Army, Washington City, District of Columbia,*

GENERAL: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of my commission of brigadier general of volunteers, from your office.

When appointed, I was fifty-two years of age, and my full name is Henry Hastings Sibley. No official oath accompanied the commission, for the reason, probably, that when I received the letter of appointment I was required to return the blank oath sent with it, properly filled and executed, which was done, and it is on file in your office. I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

May 2, 1865, he became a director in the Minnesota Valley Railroad Company, whose name was afterward changed, July 9, 1869, to that of the St. Paul & Sioux City Railroad Company, and in whose service he continued until 1882. The memory of his high merit, however, and valuable services, not only to the state but the nation, and the respect in which he was held by the different military bureaus at Washington, commanded for him, in view of still higher position, the warmest and weightiest commendations, and inspired the purpose to see that such merit was duly rewarded. From Fort Randall, Dakota Territory, Major General Curtis, under date of September 29, 1865, — and from St. Louis, under date of November

7, 1865, Major General Pope,—and, again, from St. Paul, under date of October 12, 1865, Governor (Senator elect) Ramsey, all addressed special communications and indorsements to Major General Halleck, urging, in the most flattering terms and the strongest manner, the appointment of General Sibley as “Brevet Major General, United States Volunteers,” “in view of his distinguished services in the Indian campaigns of 1862 and 1863,” also, “in view of valuable services to the general government,” and, besides, in view of “his economical and judicious administration of the military district of Minnesota, which for three years he has commanded,” and, finally, “for his devotion to the country.” Notwithstanding every effort made by political partisans, and certain officials of the Indian department of the state, whom General Sibley had looked after with his usual conscientious regard, much to their disappointment, official notification that the high distinction, sought for him, had been conferred by the president of the United States, reached his hands, in the form of the following document:

WAR DEPARTMENT,

WASHINGTON, November 29, 1865.

SIR: You are hereby informed that the president of the United States has appointed you, for efficient and meritorious services, a major general of volunteers, by brevet, in the service of the United States, to rank as such from the twenty-ninth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five. Should the senate, at their next session, advise and consent thereto, you will be commissioned accordingly.

Immediately on receipt hereof, please to communicate to this department, through the adjutant general of the army, your acceptance or non-acceptance; and, with your letter of acceptance, return the oath herewith inclosed, properly filled up, subscribed and attested, and report your age, birthplace, and the state of which you were a permanent resident.

You will report for duty to.....

EDWIN M. STANTON,

*Secretary of War.*

*Brevet Major General Henry H. Sibley, United States Volunteers.*

The acceptance of the appointment was duly acknowledged by General Sibley:

ST. PAUL, MINN., December 14, 1865.

*Brevet Major General L. Thomas, Adjutant General United States Army, Washington City, D. C.,*

GENERAL: I have the honor to notify the war department, through you, of my acceptance of the appointment of major general by brevet, conferred upon me by the president twenty-ninth November, 1865.

I was born in Detroit, Michigan, my age is fifty-four, and I am a resident of the State of Minnesota. Herewith I respectfully return the oath of



office duly filled up, subscribed and attested. I was assigned to duty as commissioner to treat with the hostile Indians of the Upper Missouri, by Special Order, No. 450, dated August 21, 1865, from the war department, and am now awaiting further instructions from the honorable secretary of the interior. Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

HENRY H. SIBLEY,

*Brevet Major General, United States Volunteers.*

The senate, at its next session, having "advised" and "consented" to the appointment, the official parchment, declaring and attesting the honor bestowed, as a reward, "*for efficient and meritorious services*," was, after the customary delay, received by General Sibley, bearing date April 7, 1866, the commission, however, taking effect from November 29, 1865, and is as follows:

WASHINGTON, April 7, 1866.

*The President of the United States of America, to all who shall see these presents, greeting:*

Know ye, That I do hereby confer on Henry H. Sibley of the United States Volunteers, in the service of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, the rank of major general by brevet, in said service, to rank as such from the twenty-ninth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five, for efficient and meritorious services. And I do strictly charge and require all officers and soldiers under his command, to obey and respect him accordingly. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future president of the United States of America, and other officers set over him, according to law, and the rules and discipline of war. This commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the president of the United States for the time being.

Given under my hand at the City of Washington, this seventh day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six, and in the ninetieth year of the Independence of the United States.

By the President.

(Signed,) ANDREW JOHNSON.

(Signed,) EDWIN M. STANTON,

*Secretary of War.*

The transmission of this document was accompanied by the usual note from the adjutant general's office at Washington:

WAR DEPARTMENT,

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

WASHINGTON, April 20, 1866.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose to you, herewith, your commission of brevet major general, the receipt of which please acknowledge. I am sir, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

J. C. KELTON,

*Assistant Adjutant General.*

*Brevet Major General Henry H. Sibley, United States Volunteers.*

The acceptance of the commission was duly acknowledged, as follows:

ST. PAUL, MINN., April 30, 1866.

*Brigadier General L. Thomas, Adjutant General United States Army, Washington City, D. C.,*

GENERAL: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of my commission of brevet major general, United States Volunteers. I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

HENRY H. SIBLEY,

*Brevet Major General, United States Volunteers.*

Major General Sibley was not mustered out of the service until late in 1866, along with others whose names were reserved, and continued by the government, for special reasons. His name occurs in the list of officers "honorably mustered out of the service of the United States," under date of December 28, 1865, according to "General Orders, No. 168," and among whom were Generals Rosecrans, Sykes, Custer, Pleasanton, Johnson, Sanborn, McCook, and others, brave soldiers, who had deserved well of their country. But, so far as relates to General Sibley, the order was "revoked" by "Special Orders, No. 85, 1866," a copy of which was immediately forwarded, from the war department, to General Sibley himself. It was the following:

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
WASHINGTON, February 24, 1866.

SPECIAL ORDERS, No. 85.

(*Extract.*)

8. By direction of the president, the muster out of the service of the United States, of Brigadier, and Brevet Major, General H. H. Sibley, United States Volunteers, to date January 15th, as directed in General Orders, War Department, No. 168, 1865, is hereby revoked, and the instructions to this officer, to report to the honorable secretary of the interior, contained in Special Orders, War Department, No. 450, August 21, 1865, are still, and will be regarded as having continued, in force.

By order of the Secretary of War.

(Signed,) E. D. TOWNSEND,  
*Assistant Adjutant General.*

(Official.)

W. A. NICHOLS,  
*Assistant Adjutant General.*

*General Sibley, National Hotel, Washington, D. C.*

It was in pursuance of the same policy, on the part of the government, that, August 15, 1865, General Sibley, prior to

the receipt of his formal commission as major general, to which rank, however, he had already been appointed, was, with others, constituted one of a mixed civil and military commission, by President Andrew Johnson, to negotiate treaties with the Sioux and Cheyennes on the Upper Missouri, and also with other tribes of Northwestern Indians of disaffected and hostile disposition. It was of the first importance, in such a commission as this, that General Sibley, known to the Indians as an officer of high rank in the United States service, should abide still in that service, in order to retain his official influence over the tribes, as a military officer acting in the name of the government. Hence the Special Order, No. 85. The places of negotiation were Council Bluffs and Sioux City. The official document is the following:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
August 15, 1865.

Newton Edmunds, governor and *ex-officio* superintendent of Indian affairs of Dakota Territory, Edward B. Taylor, superintendent of Indian affairs for the Northern superintendency, Major General S. R. Curtis, Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, Henry W. Reed, Oran Guernsey, are hereby appointed commissioners to negotiate, under the instructions of the secretary of the interior, a treaty or treaties with the several tribes of Sioux and Cheyenne Indians of the Upper Missouri, and any other tribes in that region, who have recently been engaged in hostilities with the United States, but who are now anxious to make peace.

(Signed,) ANDREW JOHNSON,  
*President.*

The official notification was in the following terms:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
August 15, 1865.

SIR: I transmit, herewith, a copy of an order of the president, of the fifteenth instant, appointing certain commissioners, of whom you are one, to negotiate, under instructions of the secretary of the interior, treaties with certain Indian tribes therein referred to. You will be further advised as to the time when, and the place where, the council will be held. I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,  
JAS. HARLAN,  
*Secretary.*

*Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, St. Paul, Minn.*

The promptness with which this important service was executed may be seen from the telegrams sent to General Sibley, in rapid succession:

[Telegram.]

ST. PAUL, Aug. 21, 1865.

By Telegraph from Washington, 21st, 1865.

*To Brigadier General H. H. Sibley:*

You and General Curtis are detailed by the president's orders to negotiate treaty with Sioux and Cheyenne Indians of Upper Missouri. Report by letter to secretary of interior. Orders will meet you at St. Louis. Acknowledge receipt by telegraph. By order of the secretary of war.

(51 au 448 pd.)

R. WILLIAMS,

*Adjutant.*

[Telegram.]

ST. PAUL, Aug. 22, 1865.

By Telegraph from Washington, Aug. 22, 1865.

*To H. H. Sibley, Brigadier General:*

Meet commission to treat with Northwestern Indians at Council Bluffs 5th Sept. At Sioux City on the 10th.

(17 au 225 pd.)

R. B. VANVALKENBURG,

*Assistant Commissioner.*

[Telegram.]

ST. PAUL, Aug. 26, 1865.

By Telegraph from Washington, 26th, 1865.

*To Brigadier General Sibley:*

A letter to Major General Curtis. The commission will meet as proposed. Make the effort to be present. I hope you will be able to join them. General Curtis goes to St. Louis.

(31 au 365 pd.)

JAS. HARLAN,

*Secretary.*

[Telegram.]

ST. PAUL, 30 Aug., 1865.

By Telegraph from Washington, 30, 1865.

*To H. H. Sibley:*

Yours of twenty-third received. You will join the commission at Council Bluffs on the fifth, or Sioux City on the tenth September, as may suit your convenience.

(28 au 335 pd.)

JAS. HARLAN.

[Telegram.]

ST. PAUL, August 31, 1865.

By Telegraph from St. Louis, 30th Aug., 1865.

*To Brigadier General Sibley:*

General Curtis is here and will be at Council Bluffs on the tenth of September, at Sioux City fifteenth September. Expects you to join him. Send scouts to notify head chief of Indians to be at Fort Rice on the fifteenth (15) day of October.

(41 ja 378 pd.)

JNO. T. SPRAGUE,

*Colonel and Chief.*

It is almost needless to narrate that the commission discharged its trust successfully, and to the satisfaction of the general government, the treaties made being ratified by the senate. Of the value of General Sibley's services, at such a time, the best evidence is an earnest letter from Secretary Harlan, the following winter, February 13, 1866, to General Sibley, urging him to allow himself to become a member of still another commission "to complete the work commenced last autumn, and, if possible, conclude treaties with *all* the considerable bands not treated with last fall,"—a request with which General Sibley complied, thus continuing to serve the government in positions than which none could be more difficult or more responsible.

Still other positions of trust and responsibility awaited him in the city he had made his home, and in the state he had served so well. In 1867, he was elected president of the St. Paul Gas Light Company, serving continuously for twenty-three years, and still remains daily occupied with the duties of its office. During the same year he was also elected president of the Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Company of St. Paul, afterward consolidated with the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company of Milwaukee. April, 1869, he was elected president of the St. Paul City Bank, in which capacity he served till January, 1873.

In March, 1870, he was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce of St. Paul, and re-elected in 1873, serving for the years 1870–1872 and 1878–1880. November 15, 1880, he tendered his resignation to the chamber in the following communication:

ST. PAUL, November 15, 1880.

*To the Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, City,*

GENTLEMEN: I have the honor hereby, respectfully to resign my position as president of the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce. Having labored at least zealously and faithfully, lo! these many years, here and elsewhere, to promote the best interests of this city and of the state at large, I can reasonably claim that I have earned a discharge from further active service. My private affairs have meanwhile suffered from inattention, and I must devote to them what remains of my time before "the night cometh wherein no man can work."

I beg leave to express to you, gentlemen, and to others with whom I have associated in the board, my thankful acknowledgments for the uniform forbearance, consideration, and respect accorded me during my long term of service as presiding officer of the board and of the chamber. Respectfully,

Your Friend and Fellow Citizen,

HENRY H. SIBLEY.

The proposed resignation excited many regrets and much interest among the members of the chamber, one motion being that "the resignation be not accepted, but a long leave of absence be granted;" another that "in view of General Sibley's long service, enfeebled health, and pressing cares, the resignation be accepted, and a committee of three be appointed to prepare resolutions suitable to the occasion." The latter motion prevailed, and a committee consisting of Dr. Day, James Smith, Jr., and Governor W. R. Marshall, having been assigned to the duty proposed, reported, the following week, November 23, 1880, a series of most complimentary resolutions, which, after remarks made upon the same, were adopted unanimously, the members of the chamber rising to their feet when the vote was taken. On motion of General Johnson, the report of the committee was ordered to be spread upon the records of the chamber. It is a matter of regret that, by some carelessness, the order of the board was not carried out, and these important resolutions are perhaps lost. What they were may be judged from the character of the remarks made by Governor Marshall, in his address to the chamber when the resignation of General Sibley was under consideration, November 15th, and the governor was made a member of the Committee on Resolutions. Speaking with warmth and great feeling, he said:

"It was with no ordinary emotion, Mr. President, that I heard the letter of General Sibley read, tendering his resignation of the office of president of the chamber. If it were just to him, I should favor an extended leave of absence. As it is manifestly his sincere wish to be relieved of the cares and responsibilities of the office, I think his wishes should be acceded to. General Sibley is a man so conscientious and punctilious in regard to every official duty, that he would not feel relieved by any leave of absence. It is due to him who has so long and so ably served the public that now, when impaired health and advancing age admonish him to lessen his burdens, his wishes should be regarded. I favor the motion of Dr. Day, that the letter of resignation should go to an appropriate committee, that there may be fitting expression, in resolutions, or otherwise, of the regret of the chamber at the severance of official relations with General Sibley. General Sibley is no ordinary man, and has had no ordinary history. If there is one man of this commonwealth entitled to the designation of its *first citizen*, highest in usefulness and foremost in the esteem and the affections of the people of all classes and all parties, it is Henry H. Sibley, who holds, and who is altogether worthy to hold, that pre-eminence. His history is that of the territory and state, whose first delegate in Congress and first governor he was. I have personally known him for more than a third of a century, and been associated with him in public bodies, in civil and military life, and social

and business relations, and I bear this willing testimony that, in all that constitutes high honor, wise and just counsel, and unsullied integrity, he stands almost or quite without a peer. It was my good fortune to serve under him in the important Indian campaigns of 1862 and 1863, and although there were some criticisms of his management of these campaigns, I believe the general judgment has come to be what mine was at that time, that the deliverance of our frontier, the rescue of the captive women and children, and the driving of the hostiles beyond the Missouri and the Canada border, where they have ever since remained, was accomplished more effectively and with less loss of life, than like results in any Indian war in our national history. But I will not detain the chamber with an extended eulogy of one who is so well known and so justly esteemed. May he be spared to us yet many years. Under the constitution of the chamber he will remain an honorary member, and on all great occasions all may yet have his prudential counsels and great ability."

In 1870, he was also appointed by Governor Pillsbury, as the president of the board of regents of the State University, and again in 1873, and again in 1876, and, so on, continuously under the successive executives of the state, holding this position of honor up to the present time. In the discharge of the numerous, varied, and onerous duties incident to so many positions of trust, General Sibley's life, during the seven years elapsing from 1863 to 1870, was one of ceaseless activity, engaged, moreover, as a public-spirited citizen in the promotion of every good work, as a private citizen enjoying the companionship of his friends, as a father the endearments of children and home, and as a man, relieving, wherever he could, the wants of the poor.

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THE times, however, were not without their agitations, and history compels us, once more, to resume the notorious question of the *state railroad bonds*. Throughout the entire life of the state, from 1858 to 1882, a period of twenty-four years, under seven different governors, and twelve successive administrations, the question of the state bonds, issued to subsidize delinquent railroad companies, was the perplexing factor in the development of state politics.

It will be remembered, that, in 1857, in the very throes of the greatest financial crisis the American nation ever experienced,—the time when the Ohio Life and Trust Company suspended, in the enormous sum of \$7,000,000, followed by the



suspension of the banks in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland, and in the District of Columbia, and by the wreck of manufacturers on every side and business failures, in liabilities to the sum of \$291,750,000, and more,—that, then, Congress granted to the Territory of Minnesota, 4,500,000 acres of land for railroads, a field too tempting to be allowed to abide unemployed by the energetic men who had flocked to Minnesota to make their fortunes; that, May 22, 1857, the territorial legislature granted the entire donation to certain impecunious chartered railroad companies, and amended the Constitution, April 15, 1858, thereby providing for the loan of the credit of the state to the companies, to the amount of \$5,000,000, to be represented by bonds, issued on certain conditions to the companies, the people approving the measure by an overwhelming majority; that, when expunging the prohibitory clause of the Constitution which forbade such loan, and pledging the faith of the state, without reservation, to the acceptors of her bonds, Governor Sibley was required to demand and receive from the companies, as security for the punctual payment and redemption of the state bonds, a mortgage of the net profits of the road, and the conveyance of the first two hundred and forty sections of unincumbered internal improvement land; that as “*further security*,” he was directed to exact an amount of “*first mortgage bonds*” on their roads, lands, and franchises, equal to the amount of bonds issued to the companies by the state; and was, moreover, required, in case of default, to issue no more bonds, but to sell the bonds of the defaulting companies, or the two hundred and forty sections of land, or foreclose the mortgage which covered the roads, lands and franchises of the companies, the state’s sufficient indemnity in case of loss. It will be remembered, also, that Governor Sibley, *construing the amendment of April 15, 1858, in favor of the state*, notified the companies that no bonds would be issued by the state unless the companies’ bonds specified “*a priority of lien*,” the supreme court deciding adversely to the governor’s construction, and compelling, by writ of mandamus, obtained by the companies, the issuance of the bonds apart from the pre-condition the governor required. And, further it will be remembered, that, after the companies had commenced operations and earned a large amount of the securities, a warfare was waged upon the bonds so persistent and unscrupu-

lous as to excite distrust, the effect of which was that neither the governor nor the companies were able to negotiate the bonds and obtain funds to carry on the work, so that the companies became insolvent, ceased operations, defaulted in payment of interest, and the state foreclosed the securities. By the foreclosure proceedings, the state acquired two hundred and fifty miles of graded road, the lands and franchises of the companies, and a title to all the securities, including nearly 5,000,000 acres of land, as security for the liability on \$2,275,000 of bonds with interest, so that the state — surety — became the owner of assets enough to more than satisfy its own claim, itself becoming rich on the ruin of companies whose confidence it sought and won by its own free legislation.

But this was not all. The opportunity had come for politicians to rise into power by pandering to the immorality of the people. Another amendment was passed, under Governor Ramsey's administration, November 6, 1860, prescribing that no provision of any kind should be made by the legislature, tax or other, to pay either principal or interest, *without first submitting the same to the people for their prior consent and ratification*. Astounding, beyond degree, as was this measure, it was readily adopted by the people, in overwhelming majority, and under Republican rule. The morality of the state seemed hopelessly compromised by this legislation, and conscience and honor apparently abandoned forever. The situation was portentous enough. By state enactment, and judicial decision, the bonds had been issued, a relentless war waged against them, the companies wrecked, the securities foreclosed, the state thus acquiring a title to the companies' property in amount more than enough to twice satisfy her own claims, yet refusing to apply to the liquidation of the debt the companies' property recovered by foreclosure, giving the same to other companies, then, having indemnified herself, openly *repudiated* her own most sacred obligations, in the face of the civilized world! The amendment of November 6, 1860, was a practical nullification and extinction of the good faith of the state pledged to the companies in the amendment of April 15, 1858, the defendant against the plaintiff's claim being her own judge in the case, having first deprived the legislature of its legal jurisdiction, and by consent of the legislature itself. In this manner, the sanctity of covenants,

honor, justice, truth, and fidelity, were publicly violated in the name of the state, and the appeal of the bondholders for protection and relief spurned with contempt.

The defense of repudiation was, in general, the false defense of "inability to pay," "no authority to pay," "no legal contract," and the "invalidity of the bonds." More especially, the plea by which it was sought to be justified, was this, (1) that "the amendment of April 15, 1858, was passed *before* Minnesota was admitted into the Union as a state, May 11, 1858;" (2) that Congress had, in the admission of the state, "only recognized the original and unamended Constitution of the state, adopted by the people, October 13, 1857;" (3) that there was "an illegal incongruity in a *state* legislature uniting with a *territorial* governor in the passage of the bond measure;" (4) that "a state legislature has no power to provide for the payment of principal or interest apart from the consent of the people;" or keep the faith of the people by whom the obligation of the state had been impaired, *i. e.* no power to compel the people to respect their own obligations against their own will; (5) that, although the state had amended her Constitution in favor of the companies, April 15, 1858, yet November 6, 1858, notwithstanding the bonds had been issued, and the bondholders accepted the offer of the state, investing therein, "the state had practically withdrawn her offer, and expunged from the Constitution the evidence of her pledge, thereby annulling the record of her contract, and restraining the legislature from further action except by the will of the people;" (6) that "the financial crisis of 1857," whereby capital was frightened away from the state, was "a consideration sufficient to absolve the state from any moral obligation in the case;" and (7) that the companies were "delinquent and impecunious at the time of the contract," the state being betrayed into the relation of an "indorser for a worthless creditor."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The amendment of November 6, 1860, that wiped out the amendment of April 15, 1858, allowing the \$5,000,000 loan, went to the unjustifiable and dishonest extent of declaring that the bonds, already out, should *never be paid unless sanctioned by a vote of the people!* The whole transaction, as to the loan, was a bad bargain, made when the country was in the throes of financial dissolution, and *any* remedy that presented itself was seized upon as a drowning man clutches at a straw. The folly was in going into it. The crime was in trying to sneak out of it under the shield of state sovereignty, which should never be invoked save in the cause of human rights, and the defense of the honor of the commonwealth.—Hon. Charles E. Flandrau, Address, Pioneer Association, Ramsey County, pp. 19, 20, 1886.

In contrast with this deep moral and political defection, it will ever stand as a ground of gratitude, that the state still retained in her bosom men of honor, courage, and faith, who did not despair, in the hour of her darkest disgrace, to redeem her name from open reproach and shame. Eminent among such was ex-Governor Sibley, whose moral resentment was roused, strong to repel the dishonor that mantled a state for whose life he had risked already his own in the tented field. In reply to the whole defense of repudiation, he maintained (1) that the state was abundantly able to pay her just obligations, having a future second to none of her sister states in the Union, and able to pay, "dollar for dollar," with all the accrued interest, on all that she legally owed; (2) that, at the peril of the loss of her credit and name forever, she was bound to pay; (3) that the Constitution of the state recognized by Congress, at the time of the admission of Minnesota into the Union, provided for its own amendment, and therefore Congress had recognized that provision and its effect, by recognizing the Constitution itself; (4) that the alleged "illegal incongruity" of a *state* legislature uniting with a *territorial* governor, in the bond measure, was a mere pretense, affecting in no way the obligation of the state, since the bonds were issued pursuant to the amendment of April 15, 1858, an amendment adopted by seven-eighths of the people, irrespective of party lines; (5) that the amendment of November 6, 1860, was in violation of the Constitution of the United States, which forbids that contracts should ever be impaired; (6) that the financial crisis of 1857 no more absolved Minnesota from her just obligations than it did other states of the Union; (7) that the legislature was bound to respect and not relinquish its own jurisdiction, and, apart from this swerving will or consent of the people, provide for the principal and interest of the bonds, adjust the claims of the bondholders, and protect the good name and credit of the state; (8) that no subsequent amendment of the Constitution can ablate the vested right of the bondholders, which endures even were compacts no longer regarded as sacred by men; (9) that the people of Minnesota, when expunging the prohibitory clause from their Constitution in favor of the companies, and the supreme court, when granting its mandamus to compel the issue of the bonds, regardless of the governor's construction of the amendment, were fully aware that the companies asked the credit of the

state *because* they were delinquent and impecunious; and (10) that the *act of repudiation*, done in the name of the people, was an act of public infamy, and an exhibition of state perfidy and dishonesty, disgraceful to the state, destructive of her name, and abhorred by every honest man; a moral prostitution of her statehood, sudden, open, shameless, and glaring, and which could only forfeit, for Minnesota, the respect of all good citizens within her bounds, and attract the contempt of the nation and the civilized world.

The opposition General Sibley was called upon to encounter was a formidable one. His return from his last campaign against the Sioux Indians found "*repudiation*" an existing fact. His return again from the public service of the country in the discharge of his duties as a member of the mixed civil and military commission on Indian affairs, found the "*sentiment of repudiation*" stronger than ever, the bondholders helpless, before the indisposition of the party in power, to afford them relief. Two millions two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars' (\$2,275,000) worth of state bonds had been thrown upon the market, the state repudiating the same, the depreciated bonds made use of as a basis for banking purposes, the notes issued by the banks worthless outside of the state, the banks themselves failing, and the bonds only sinking deeper in the disesteem of those who held the fancy paper. Politicians were industriously circulating false statements, everywhere inoculating the incoming immigration with the virus of the idea that "the issuance of the bonds was illegal," and the bonds themselves an "old territorial fraud," deserving only of repudiation. Newcomers were not bound to help pay a debt that they had not voted to incur, nor be held responsible for a folly of which they were not guilty. Year after year, continuously, this "vexed question," perpetually discussed, and affecting the financial and political condition of the state, a question agitated in every campaign, and aired in every legislature, became, as the Ghost of Banquo, an unwelcome presence, goading the conscience and mocking the peace of the state, refusing to "down" at anyone's bidding, so long as the injured creditors confronted the door of the treasury with a claim and demand which all the world knew to be just. Like a corroding acid, this repudiated obligation, and unliquidated debt, ate into the very vitals of the state.

Governor Marshall, one of General Sibley's most trusted officers during the campaigns against the Sioux Indians, was the first executive, after the practical repudiation, November 6, 1860, who suggested to the legislature a means of relief to the bondholders, and a way of redeeming the honor of the state. It was discovered, in 1867, that, by a half-forgotten act of Congress, September 4, 1841, public lands to the amount of 500,000 acres were granted to certain states for internal improvements, and that Minnesota was entitled, as one of such states, to this offered share of the public domain. Governor Marshall, at once, recommended "that the proceeds of the sales of the 500,000 acres be set apart as a sinking fund to pay whatever might be ultimately settled upon as justly and equitably due the holders of the bonds."<sup>1</sup> These lands cost the state nothing, and the proceeds of the 500,000 acres would be ample, without taxation of the people, and without needless delay to the bondholders, to meet the state debt of \$2,275,000, incurred by the issuance of the bonds. The recommendation was wise and judicious. By frequent articles in the daily press, General Sibley sought to promote this measure, and stir the legislature to action, reminding the people of the indelible stain Mississippi had brought on herself by a single act of repudiation, making her name "the synonym of dishonor in both hemispheres." Strange as it may seem, yet, notwithstanding appeals like these, an organized opposition to any redemption of the tarnished honor of the state existed, led by certain politicians seeking the popular favor, and hoping to gain political power, even by blasting the credit of the state for the sake of accomplishing their personal ends. Against such, and their daring schemes and measures, General Sibley, surcharged with an electric force of indignation, fulminated his scathing sentences, "*Give us,*" said he, "*plague, pestilence, famine, loss of public and private wealth, a loss which men may overcome by industry and economy, but save us from this monstrous exhibition of perfidy, and the public manifesto of a determination by the state to play the part of a repudiator and common robber such as would render Minnesota a stench in the nostrils of Christendom. Such a consummation would set the seal of infamy indelible on the fair and noble 'North Star State,' make angels weep, and cause the fiends of the infernal regions to howl with satisfaction at so glaring an instance of depravity and villainy.*"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exec. Docs., 1866, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul Pioneer, May 1, 1867.



These were strong words, but needed. Unscrupulous men had come into the state. The public conscience was corrupt in the extreme. The pride of the old pioneer was touched. The sanctity of oaths and covenants seemed gone. What should excite indignation only provoked a wink and a smile. The morality of the state was that of fraud and defiance. The maxim of Rob Roy, quoted by General Sibley, seemed the only ethics, namely:

*"The simple plan  
That he shall take who has the power,  
And he shall keep who can!"*

Therefore did General Sibley make his appeal, even to churches and the ministers in the state, who professed, at least, to be the "light" and the "salt" of the earth, the conservators of public instruction and morals, and the enemies of all lies, wickedness, fraud, and wrong. Of what character must their religion, or that of their flocks, be, when men, who claim to practice better things, are found, not only in the ranks of professing Christians, but of public offenders, and highway robbers, sitting at the sacramental table and yet repudiating their own most solemn engagements! Or what confidence can be reposed in a pulpit loud in its denunciation of some national evil, like slavery, geographically distant from it, yet absolutely silent as to a score of public crimes geographically near, and in which church members had no minor share! "We are threatened," said he, "with a calamity in the shape of the repudiation of an obligation, which would render us obnoxious to the charge of wholesale robbery, and of being a stench in the nostrils of Christendom. *We say it is unaccountable that those in charge of religious congregations, who believe in the propriety of introducing into the pulpit subjects of worldly concern, and who have thundered, for years, against institutions and practices averred to be repugnant to the word of God, and the spirit of the age, should REMAIN MUTE, and unexcited, in view of a contemplated scheme of dishonor and shame at home, which, if successful, will work the moral as well as financial ruin of the state!* Certainly, if it is right and proper to denounce openly, in a Christian church, the chief magistrate of the land for pursuing courses and policies deemed politically wrong, it is not the less incumbent upon these ministers of the Gospel to hurl their shafts of indignation and rebuke at unscrupulous and miserable politicians of a lower grade, for their endeavor to corrupt and mislead the



*people of Minnesota. Is their crime less heinous than that of some high official? Are they not conspiring against the common principles of honesty and doing their utmost to plunge the state into moral guilt of the deepest dye? The watchmen on the towers of Zion will prove recreant to their great trust unless they instantly sound the alarm, and warn all those within the sphere of their influence to defeat the plotters who, to accomplish their selfish purposes, are striving to deliver Minnesota over to the dominion of the Evil One."*<sup>1</sup>

These high-souled words were not without their value. The conscience of the better portion of the state began to be aroused. The pulpit was compelled to speak. Not only did the pulpit speak, but ecclesiastical assemblies recognized the peril of the situation and the damage to religion as well as morals. The hope of reversing repudiation seemed now to be possible. Eminent counsel, like Justice Curtis of the United States Supreme Court, and Hon. W. M. Evarts of New York, the attorney general of the United States, were consulted, and their legal judgment published, that "a change of constitution cannot release a state from contracts made under a constitution which permits them to be made, but that the bonds are valid contracts not impaired by any subsequent amendment to the Constitution, but are binding upon the state, and protected by the Constitution of the United States; and that the legislature has power to provide for their payment without submitting to the people any act passed for that purpose."

Under the administration of Governor Austin, the summer of 1870 saw the State of Minnesota agitated afresh with the all-absorbing discussion of the bond question. The opinion of the governor that the bonds were of "questionable validity" only made the discussions all the more earnest. General Sibley took the field in person, in defense of their legality, and in the hope of doing something effectively, not only to remove misapprehension and falsehood from the minds of the people, large numbers of whom had been poisoned by the politicians, but, if possible, to redeem the honor and credit of the state. March 4, 1870, in order to relieve the desperate condition of things, the legislature, following the suggestion previously made by Governor Marshall, passed an act giving opportunity to the holders of the bonds to exchange the same

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Pioneer, July 17, 1867.

for 500,000 acres of internal improvement land, the act, however, to be submitted to the people for their approval. This submission of the acts of the legislature to the will of the people, in the case of a contract between the people and the railroad companies, was only a renewed abdication of the functions of the legislature, under the excuse of non-jurisdiction, and a bid for popular rejection of the plans of settlement. Pending the action of the people, General Sibley addressed, in the market square of the city of St. Paul, May 22, 1870, a large concourse of his fellow citizens, and in a clear, earnest, and triumphant manner, pleaded the cause of the state as against the politicians, the cause of the bondholders against the state, and the absolute necessity to redeem the honor of the state from the dark eclipse that now obscured it. October, 1870, he was elected from Ramsey county to the legislature for the express purpose of reviewing the entire question from the beginning, vindicating his own administration, repelling the slanders circulated concerning the issuance of the bonds, fixing the responsibility of the failure of the whole enterprise where it properly belonged, and to do what lay in his power to remove from the state the moral and financial turpitude of repudiation. February 4, 1871, he introduced the following resolution into the house of representatives:

*"Resolved, That it is the sense of this house that the honor of the state requires the speedy settlement of the question of the state railroad bonds in a manner that will secure to the holders of them what is fairly and equitably due them."*

Under this resolution he made his great speech in the legislature, February 8, 1871, to an audience whose ears he held in fixed attention from its beginning to its close. He recited the history of the state and of the legislation, the history of the issuance of the bonds, exhibited from official evidence his own relation to them, established the validity of the bonds, vindicated his administration from the slanders falsely circulated against it, repelled the charge of territorial fraud, emphasized the solemn obligation of the state to pay, and denounced repudiation in withering terms. It was his last appearance in the legislature of a state he had done more to found and form than any other man within or without its bounds. His warm solicitude to keep her honor pure gave unction to his words, and fervor to his action. His calm, clear argument, and his moral indignation, stately and impressive, were not lost upon the legislature, and the peroration of his speech will not be soon forgotten. His closing words were these:

"But for the abiding faith I feel in the certainty that Minnesota will honorably acquit herself of all her engagements and thus rid herself of the garment of Nessus, which now, in the shape of unliquidated obligations, is enveloping the body politic in its poisonous and deadly fold, I would not long delay to transfer myself and my children to a residence in some community where we would not be subjected to the intolerable shame and humiliation of being citizens of a repudiating state, frowned upon by a just and righteous God, and abhorred by man."<sup>1</sup>

No sooner had the speech of General Sibley been published and circulated throughout the state, than it spread to the Eastern cities, and attracted the attention of financial and commercial journals, everywhere, outside the state. The spectacle of an incorruptible man stemming the tide of repudiation could not fail to be noticed and commented upon in the most flattering terms. Seventeen presidents of different leading banks in New York City—not to mention letters from thirty of its most prominent business firms, and an avalanche of communications from various parts of the country—hastened, February 23, 1871, to address a letter of congratulation to him, expressing, in warmest terms, their deep sense of the high service he had rendered, not only to Minnesota, but to the entire nation. "As citizens of the United States, uninterested in any class of securities issued by the State of Minnesota," they begged the privilege of formulating, in terms, their gratitude for the manly effort. "No state," say they, "can afford to have the principle of repudiation even suggested as a possibility. The day has passed when any such notion can be allowed to exist even for a moment. Minnesota's natural resources are too important, and her demand for good credit and large amounts of capital too urgent, at this time, to permit the dishonest cry of repudiation to find any friends at home or abroad." Apart from the reward which the consciousness of doing right always brings, this joint testimony from the commercial voice of the centre of the nation, unexpected as unsolicited, was ample payment for the brave fight General Sibley had made in behalf of the honor and the credit of his state.

The state legislature was moved to action. Notwithstanding the people rejected the proposal to set apart 500,000 acres of the state lands for the liquidation of the debt created by the bonds, the legislature, May 2, 1871, passed an "Act of Arbitration," again to be submitted to the people, the pur-

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Press, February 9, 1871. (120,000 copies printed.)

pose of which was to "test the validity of the bonds, and amounts justly and equitably due the bondholders." This also was rejected by the people; those voting "Yes," casting ballots "against repudiation," those voting "No," casting ballots "in favor of repudiation," the one acquainting the world that some, at least, could be found in Minnesota, who prized the jewel of a "good name" above whatever else possession, the other that the majority still preferred, as citizens, to worship "Rob Roy," deeming successful escape from a legal obligation, and forceful and artful violation of plighted faith, and retention of other men's goods without right, as something more precious than public decency, honor, justice, or truth. Gilt-edged with the name of religion, the fraud might actually pass for prudence, and perfumed with the unction of devotion, it might seem no less than a flower of divine grace. The "Christian culture and civilization" of the people determined not only that the property of the companies, gained by foreclosure, but also the 500,000 acres of land, costing nothing, should not be applied to discharge the bondholders' just claims; and further, that no inquiry should be made whether any claims existed at all!

Still, there were men in the state whose faith did not fail in this trying hour. Governor C. K. Davis, urging in his valedictory message to the legislature, January 7, 1876, the appointment of a board of commissioners to arbitrate, in the whole question, appealed to the state, saying, "Let us meet our responsibilities as becomes a great state holding her honor dearer than anything else. *There is a higher rule of action which requires that states, no less than men, shall do justice, no matter how onerous the responsibility and the performance.* It is a rule that bears upon us now, and contains forces of self-assertion against which no opposition, not founded in right, can stand with any permanency. We have disregarded it too long."<sup>1</sup> The same day, Governor Pillsbury, in his inaugural message to the same legislature, smote the plea of the repudiators, as to "no ability to pay" by adducing state statistics showing the state to be an annual producer of more than \$50,000,000 of products, a possessor of more than \$220,000,000 of taxable property, with a population increasing almost beyond the power of the state to give it accommodation. Already the 500,000 acres have yielded over \$100,000, and a

<sup>1</sup> Exec. Docs., 1878, Vol. I, pp. 41, 42.

“sinking fund,” made from the same, would soon redeem the state from dishonor. The legislature turned a deaf ear to his words. Again, in another message, January 4, 1877, he renewed his appeal, reasserting the validity of the bonds, and warning the state not to put indisposition in the place of abundant ability to pay. Unheeded, he still kept up his brave, fearless, and faithful assault upon the false sentiment of the times, and sought to win the people to a better mind, and stir the legislature to needed action, and January 11, 1878, opened his mouth, after the manner of General Sibley, saying to the legislature, “No public calamity, no visitation of grasshoppers, no wholesale destruction or insidious pestilence, could possibly inflict so fatal a blow upon our state, as the deliberate repudiation of her solemn obligations. *It would be a confession more damaging to the character of a government of the people than the assault of its worst enemies. With the loss of public honor, little could remain worth preserving.*”<sup>1</sup>

The heart of the governor was evidently touched on account of the hardness of the heart of the people refusing to hear the voice of the charmer, “charming never so wisely,” and voting into the dust every measure proposed to protect the name of the state, and keep conscience and truth with men. A religious community intent on fraud and defending the same is the devil’s best card in the onward march of “our Christian culture and civilization!” As with a last gasp and sigh, Governor Pillsbury, once more, besought, obstested, implored, and even supplicated, the state to abandon her political and moral dishonesty and turn her feet to the paths of righteousness, wisdom, and truth, saying, as his accents sank in silence, January 6, 1881, “*I implore the people of Minnesota, and you, gentlemen, their representatives, to seize this last opportunity, before it is too late, to wipe out this only blot from the fair name of our beloved state!*”<sup>2</sup> Moved to some extent by the wakened conscience, and wakening appeals of noble and influential men, as well as beginning to feel some trivial sense of shame, the legislature of 1881 passed the “Internal Improvement Sinking Fund Act,” and also erected a “tribunal of district judges” to decide whether the legislature was competent of itself, in a case of contract between the state and companies

<sup>1</sup> Exec. Docs., 1877, Vol. I, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Exec. Docs., 1881, p. 39. The “opportunity” referred to was the offer of Mr. Selah Chamberlain, in behalf of himself and the bondholders, to settle at half-face value of the bonds issued, with the interest accrued.

bound by her legislation, to protect the credit of the state against the will of a people careless to keep it,—this act, like all the rest, to be “submitted to the people” for their approval or rejection! The arts of “the legislature” and the honesty of “the people,” had been sufficiently tested. Judge Dillon of the United States Court had decided, with vigor, that the bonds were “valid, and binding in law on the state, and in honor and in justice; nor can the State of Minnesota afford to bear the odium of repudiation.”<sup>1</sup> Upon appeal, the supreme court of the United States affirmed the decision of Judge Dillon, in terms of rebuke to the state, saying that “*were Minnesota amenable to the tribunals of the country as a private individual is, no court of justice would withhold its judgment against her in an action to compel her to pay.*”<sup>2</sup> It was high time to put an end to the rule of politicians seeking popular favor, and stamp out the farce of a legislature that ever abjured its own jurisdiction, and, in every act it passed to relieve the situation, held the good name and credit of the state chained to the will of a people resolved to disgrace the one and forfeit the other. The supreme court of the State of Minnesota decided that *the act of March 2, 1881, was unconstitutional* and issued a writ restraining the district judges from interfering in the manner proposed, and also decided that *the act of 1861 requiring a popular ratification of any plan the legislature might devise for settlement of the question was null and void*; and, further, that the legislature had power, of itself, to treat with the bondholders, and protect the credit of the state.

A more disgraceful chapter never appeared in the annals of any state, nor is there language enough in any vocabulary wherewith to praise the heroic men who fought repudiation inch by inch, for a quarter of a century, without interruption. The state owes them a debt it never can pay, nor can ever repudiate while the world stands. Governor Pillsbury, as soon as the supreme court of the state had rendered its decision, convoked an “extra session” of the legislature to meet October, 1881. The Republican party, that gave 40,000 majority for Garfield as president of the United States, declined to declare in its platform that it was in favor of a just and honorable settlement with the bondholders, although some of its best men admitted that the state was liable.

<sup>1</sup> Exec. Docs., 1876, Vol. I., p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



The Democratic party—not forgetful of abounding frauds ever emerging under Republican administrations, and still feeling the outrage upon the rights of the nation when, in 1876, its great standard bearer, Hon. Samuel J. Tilden, fairly elected president of the United States, was unlawfully deprived of his seat, and, later still, when the illustrious Hancock was defeated by the people's money, stolen from the government by "Star Route thieves," and expended in wholesale bribery and corruption—resolved to seize the opportunity and lift its voice, once more, against repudiation. Prior to the extra session of the legislature, the leaders of the party called a Democratic state convention, to meet in the Grand Opera House, October 6, 1881, and, as might be expected, the name of General H. H. Sibley of St. Paul was greeted with rounds of applause, and "the old war-horse of the Democracy of the state" was carried, by an enthusiastic and unanimous vote, into the presiding chair of the convention. The convention lost no time in putting itself again upon record. The Hon. Charles E. Flandrau, chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, reported the following "*platform*," which, from that hour onward, became the final official and re-enforced expression of the Democratic party against the policy of repudiation:

WHEREAS, The Democratic State Convention in 1859 embodied in its platform of principles the following, to-wit:

*First*—That it is the duty of the people of Minnesota to preserve inviolate the faith and credit of the state.

*Second*—That the doctrine of repudiation announced by the Republican party is one which is abhorrent to the Democracy and must receive the condemnation of the honest masses.

*Third*—That we pledge the Democratic party of Minnesota to honorably and promptly meet all obligations resting upon her.

AND WHEREAS, The Republican State Convention which lately held its session in this city utterly ignored in its deliberations and platform all allusion to the proposed settlement of the state railroad bonds, a question involving vitally the honor and reputation of the state; therefore,

*Resolved, Fourth*—That the principles of the Democratic party as above reproduced from the platform of the state convention in 1859, are hereby reaffirmed, and we hereby express the hope that the legislature of this state soon to assemble in special session will by prompt and practical legislation solve this grave problem.

*Resolved, Fifth*—That we express our sincere grief for the untimely death of President Garfield, and our utter horror at the wicked assassination by which he was removed from life; and we hereby tender our heartfelt sympathy to his bereaved family.



*Resolved, Sixth*—That we reaffirm the political principles announced by the Democratic National Convention which nominated Winfield S. Hancock.<sup>1</sup>

These resolutions were adopted unanimously, and *seriatim*, the whole convention rising to its feet when the "fifth" one, relating to the assassination of President Garfield, was reached, and "standing in respectful silence until the chairman declared the resolution adopted by a unanimous vote." In the nomination for state officers upon this platform, General Richard W. Johnson of St. Paul was placed at the head of the ticket, and his selection for governor of the state, and standard bearer of the party, was carried by acclamation. In accepting the nomination, General Johnson responded appropriately, concluding his remarks by saying, "Let us wipe away this stain, and if we are defeated and overborne let it be written in history that we were crushed in a war of honesty against repudiation. I thank you again for the compliment you have paid me." This testimony of the Democratic party in an hour so dark was a brave one. The candidacy for the governorship was not entered on with the least hope of success. In the words of the nominee, such was "the popular determination not to redeem the honor of the state, that the candidate who was willing to go before the people on that issue, went as the leader of a "forlorn hope." The result was the defeat of the Democratic party. During that canvass "*it was made clear that a legislature, elected on that issue, would never provide for the settlement of this vexed question, and that the only way to secure the settlement was for Governor Pillsbury to call an extra session of the old legislature, and submit the question to that body.*"<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding this, the action of the Democratic convention of October 6, 1881, had its influence, nor was the extra session of the legislature a stranger to it. And all the more was this true, inasmuch as, in the words of the Hon. Eugene M. Wilson of Hennepin, "the Republicans in their convention had *ignored the call for the extra session, and the purpose for which it was called, and had studiously avoided any allusion to the matter; a slight, an insult, to Governor Pillsbury from his own party.*"<sup>3</sup>

The Republicans, however, saw that the time had come for them also to make a record once more, and the "vexed ques-

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Globe, October 7, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> A Soldier's Reminiscences, by General R. W. Johnson, pp. 375, 376.

<sup>3</sup> St. Paul Daily Globe, October 7, 1881.

tion," kept vexed so long by the party in power, was at last composed. Mr. Selah Chamberlain, representing \$1,075,000 of bonds, in behalf of himself and others, had offered to accept "new bonds of the state" at half-face value of the old, together with the compounded interest on the coupons, in settlement of the bondholders' claims. The state accepted the offer, issued the new bonds, sold other bonds, in which the school fund was invested, to procure the money needed by the bondholders, and, with this, purchased its own new bonds, substituting them in the place of the sold bonds of the school fund, thus making that portion of the railroad bonds a permanent school fund investment, the interest on which is paid regularly by the state;—an investment never to be dishonored or repudiated while the state stands. The state auditor's report, as to the actual condition, or *status*, of the final settlement, shows the total amount of Minnesota *adjustment bonds* to be no less than \$4,287,000, as against \$2,275,000 of the original bonds. Of these \$4,287,000, the amount held by the permanent school fund is \$1,981,000; the amount held by the state university permanent fund, \$288,000; by outside parties, \$1,696,000; and redeemed by the internal improvement land fund, and destroyed, \$322,000; in all \$4,287,000.

Thus a quarter of a century had passed away from the time that the people of Minnesota, swept from their moorings by a resistless desire for railroads, while suffering under the financial blow of 1857, amended their Constitution, April 15, 1858, extracting its wisdom and supplying folly in its place. Thus ended one of the most perplexing and obstinate problems it ever befalls a state to solve;—the problem of will against conscience, truth against lies, faith against fraud, self-respect against shame, right against wrong. While the "*church*" is a supernatural institute built on the word of God, the "*state*" is a natural institute built on a foundation no less divine, viz., "man made in the image of God," the law of conscience graven in his breast. And because the constitution of man is a moral one, and the state rests upon man,—not man on the state,—therefore, in its last analysis, the constitution of the state, resting on man, must rest upon God. An atheistic state cannot survive, and an immoral state must perish. All Paganism has taught us this. In the wild rush of our modern materialistic development, we might well afford to sit at the feet of a pagan Aristotle, and learn that "the rule of law is the

rule of God and of reason, since the state is organized for the sake of justice and a good life, and the good citizen is identical with the good man;" that "virtue must be the serious care of a state that truly deserves the name, political society being in order to noble actions and an honorable self-sufficing life."<sup>1</sup> The state, as a "*public person*," must have an immutable morality, not one thing here and another there, but the same everywhere, that "*lex nata non scripta*" constitutional to man and coeternal with the mind of God, whence it came, that "*jus*," or sense of natural right, apart from which the state has no foundation, save the passions, will, and inclinations of men. A pagan Cicero, by the light of nature alone, could recognize this, in his speech for Milo, praising, before the judges, that immutable law, "not one thing at Athens and another at Rome, but the same everywhere," a law which he declared to be the "*fons œquitatis, fundamentum libertatis, vinculum societatis*." It is true that the legislature is the law-making power, and that courts are but instruments to declare and enforce it, and that the constitution of a state is the result of the will of the people. But, in "a government of the people, *by* the people, and *for* the people," it behooves *the people* to respect the *dicta* and *data* of natural justice graven in the moral constitution of man, and which are *prior* to the constitution of the state; those necessary, primary, indemonstrable, imperial, and authoritative, postulates of all society not yet dehumanized, the bed-rock and bottom of all moral distinctions and mutual confidence, apart from which no guarantees exist for justice, equity, truth, or faith, between man and man. Everything comes back, at last, to personal integrity. Our rights and obligations grow out of our relations, nor is there a place where all the moralities and decencies that belong to individual or associated life are displayed more conspicuously than in those covenant or contract relations which underlie the whole fabric of civilized society, and which, if grounded in justice and truth, no legal technics or tricks of practice, or judicial bias, may evade or destroy. The state must have a "*conscience*," and her morality must be something other than the evolutionary "*maxims of a generalized expediency*," as Herbert Spencer and his school would have it; something better than the "*customary commercial morality*" of the Bentham-Paley school, whose only pole-star was that

<sup>1</sup> Politics of Aristotle (Jowett), Book, Vol. III, p. 9.

only "what is expedient is right!" Expedient it may be to amend the constitution and pledge the faith of a state to men who confide in her morality. Expedient it may be to repudiate that faith, and break covenant rather than keep it, and while condemning in one breath the divine right of kings to be tyrants, commend in the next the human right of states to be thieves. But, when once such "expediency" has fully usurped the throne of "right," and politicians, people, legislatures, courts, and magistrates, bow down to worship this idol of their hands, the one right that remains is the right to invoke divine "judgment" to wipe out from existence an organized system of robbery, falsehood, fraud, and oppression, too deep for human plumb-line to sound, too shameful for human conscience to bear. Apart from immutable morality, the laws of a state are vain. "*What avail vain laws apart from morals?*"<sup>1</sup>

Sibley, Flandrau, Marshall, Davis, Pillsbury, Johnson, Wilson, and others, who insisted that Minnesota should redeem her obligations,—names worthy to be remembered,—were contending, not so much for the mere form of an external contract, as for the backmost, bottommost principles of natural, civil, and moral right, the wreck of which, by the people, was the shame of the state. Nor was it of small significance that the greatest Roman lawyer and orator of his time, a man versed in moral science, not less than in jurisprudence, the foremost statesman of his day, always advised the sons of Romulus to act, not from the force of an "*obligatio*" or outward statute, binding, as if with iron hand, some criminal ready to escape, but from the force of an "*officium*" or sense of moral duty persuading from within; in other words, to act from the force of "*conscience*" implanted and unperverted, a power apart from which all obligations, covenants, and contracts, are "*pacta nuda*," and worse than in vain. A state without a conscience is the enemy of every man's home, of every man's business, and of all mankind. "An honest man is the noblest work of God," and an honest state is the noblest work of man. The "Ten Commandments" were the constitution of the Jewish commonwealth, and it was to the credit of the Christian state, in the hour of its formation, that it

1 "*Quid leges, sine moribus,  
Vance proficient?*"

—Horace Odes, Lib. III, Ode 24.

engrossed the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount in the Theodosian Code. In that one majestic sentence of the Constitution of the United States which ordains that *contracts shall not be impaired*, all the moralities of life are covered, and all the rights and relations of the citizen and the state, formed upon these moralities, are protected.

As to General Sibley's course, on the "*bond question*," he is a blind reader of facts who cannot see that the character shining here with such moral luster, in the midst of surrounding corruption, is the same character that shone so brightly, in reference to the "*Indian question*," when, in the midst of the National Congress, he pleaded the same cause in behalf of the red man, defrauded, oppressed, and deceived, not alone by the state but by the nation itself. If Aristides merited the title of "*just*," and Socrates deserved a name for teaching "*manners*" to the youth in the streets of Athens, Minnesotians will not withhold the like praise from him who raised his voice in both national and state legislatures, and in the executive chair, in defense of the same cause that made their fame immortal. An example of public fidelity and incorruptibility, like this, lifting itself aloft in the forefront of the history of the state, and standing firm amid all subsequent conflicts and strifes, is of priceless value to the young men and people of the state. Like the olive tree, sung by Sophocles and sacred to Minerva, it is a plant not set by human hands, of terror to its foes, and protection to its friends; an immortal tree no storms can uproot or destroy. If any of all the sons of Minnesota is entitled modestly to repeat the words of the Arabian emir, it is Henry Hastings Sibley, her first governor,—"*I put on righteousness, and it clothed me. My judgment was a robe and a diadem. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.*"

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THE retirement of General Sibley from the hall of the state legislature (1871) did not relieve him from the burdens of duty to which he was called, notwithstanding his wish for a life more serene and free from care. Whenever the interests of the city, state, or even of the nation,—whenever municipal advancement, the cause of education, financial progress, public morals, social benefit, or protracted service—demanded men

of integrity, benevolence, talent, experience, influence, and character, his name was among the first to be mentioned, and his co-operation the first to be sought. His long life, and active career, and stainless record, as a public man, his prominence in every enterprise that engaged the energies of his fellow citizens, and the universal confidence reposed in his judgment, entitled him to the conceded rank of the "*First Citizen of Minnesota*." With advancing years his honors still continued to be multiplied.

In 1872, he was appointed "chairman of the board of commissioners to select and purchase, for the city of St. Paul, the site of a public park," on a grand scale, the result of which was the choice of the ground at Lake Como. In 1873, he was elected a director in the First National Bank, and still remains in its service. In 1874, he was appointed, by Governor Davis, president of the State Normal School Board.

The confidence, however, reposed by the national government in his personal "integrity, ability, and discretion," and in his large Indian experience, soon called him again to serve his country, on one of her most important commissions, a commission no less than to supervise the operations of the whole Indian department, in reference to vast appropriations and contingent expenses, North, East, South, and West, as provided for under a recent act of Congress. The document is as follows:

*Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States of America, to all who shall see these presents, greeting:*

Know ye, That, reposing special trust and confidence in the integrity, ability, and discretion of Henry H. Sibley of Minnesota, I do appoint him to be a commissioner under the fourth section of an act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian department, approved April 10, 1869, and do authorize and empower him to execute and fulfill the duties of that office according to law, and to hold the said office, with all the rights and emoluments thereunto legally appertaining unto him the said Henry H. Sibley, during the pleasure of the president of the United States for the time being.

In testimony whereof, I have caused these letters to be made patent, and the seal of the department of the interior to be hereunto affixed. Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the third day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninety-eighth.

By the President,

U. S. GRANT.

C. DELANO,

*Secretary of the Interior.*

In the year 1875, when the state was scourged by the "locust plague" that devoured the substance of both man and beast, in large sections of the state, he was appointed, by Governor Davis, as chairman of the Committee of Relief in behalf of the sufferers, and discharged the duties incident to that mission with such promptness, wisdom, and fidelity, as to call forth the public thanks of the chief executive. In the same year he was elected a member of the American Geographical Society, Cooper Institute, New York, and, again, was chosen president of the Minnesota State Historical Society. Once more, he was summoned to act upon another Indian commission. In addition to this, he was nominated, by acclamation, in his district, for Congress, a district scoring 20,000 Republican majority, and though conscious of coming defeat, yet accepted the nomination in deference to the wishes of his political associates, and out of regard for his warm personal friend, Major General Hancock, then a candidate for the presidency of the United States.

In what high esteem he was held by the regents of the State University, may be learned from the fact that, when, in 1876, General Sibley was burdened with many cares, and much serving, and desired to resign his position as president of the board, which he had filled with such credit to himself, and such benefit to the institution, the proposition was instantly repelled. Of this, the following correspondence is but a portion of the pleasing evidence:

STATE OF MINNESOTA,  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,  
ST. PAUL, May 19, 1876.

MY DEAR GENERAL: It is with sincere regret I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the seventeenth instant, tendering your resignation as president and member of the board of regents of the University of Minnesota, and as president and member of the State Normal Board. I have but a moment to consider the communication. Please excuse my non-acceptance of the resignation of one whose services are so valuable and important to this state, until at least I can have the opportunity of a consultation with you. I am,

Truly Yours,  
J. S. PILLSBURY.

*To General H. H. Sibley, St. Paul, Minn.*

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA,  
MINNEAPOLIS, May 21, 1876.

GENERAL: On receiving your letter on Saturday I went at once to Governor Pillsbury and begged him on behalf of the faculty not to accept your resignation. Your retirement from the board and from your office in the board at this time would be a great calamity to the institution.



No new man, however great his natural abilities, can perform the services which your long experience and acquaintance with the affairs of the university enable you easily to render. Your place cannot be filled. Permit me, for myself and my colleagues, most earnestly and respectfully to urge that, when Governor Pillsbury comes to you to beg that you will withdraw your resignation, you consent still longer to sacrifice your valuable time and personal ease to the public service. I am, General,

Most Truly and Respectfully Yours, etc.,

WM. W. FOLWELL.

*General H. H. Sibley, St. Paul, Minn.*

In 1878, he was elected president of the Oakland Cemetery Association, and continues still to discharge the duties pertaining to that office. In 1879, he was chosen to preside at the celebration of the "Thirteenth Anniversary of the Minnesota State Historical Society," delivering the opening address to a large and intelligent audience gathered in the representatives' hall at the capitol, and reading to them the letter of President Lincoln authorizing the execution of the Indians, in the winter of 1862. In 1881, the year before the final settlement of the question of the state bonds, his fortunes saw him again leading the party with which he had always acted, in one more effort to redeem the honor of the state, his manly figure adorning the president's chair in the Democratic State Convention. The following year, 1883, he was, once more, appointed by the president of the United States, as president of the commission of the United States Government to settle all claims for damages done to the Chippewa Indians by construction of national reservoirs.

The arduous activities, which burdens so multiplied imposed upon General Sibley, were not unmingled with a compensation of social enjoyment, and frequent public recognition of his personal worth. On any unusual occasion pertaining to the welcome of a celebrated character hailing from abroad, or a citizen of eminence from another state, or relating to events connected with the history of his own state, or of the nation, an assemblage without his presence could only be wanting in one of the features most essential to its success.

As years passed away and planetary revolution completed bi-centennial, semi-centennial, and quarto-centennial periods, dated from special events or great occurrences in the life of the Territory and the State of Minnesota, and brightened the recollection of scenes long to be remembered, it was but natural to institute festivities fittingly to celebrate the same. In these, also, General Sibley bore a conspicuous part.

The year 1880 was the "*Bi-Centennial Anniversary of the Discovery of the Falls of St. Anthony*," by Hennepin, an event celebrated by a large gathering of representative men of the State of Minnesota, meeting in a grand arbor erected for the occasion, on the campus of the State University, at Minneapolis. By unanimous voice, General Sibley, president of the board of regents of the university, officiated as president of the *bi-centennial*, and was himself the central figure, and master of ceremonies. Among the notable men then present were Alexander Ramsey, Henry M. Rice, Russell Blakeley, three of the Washburn family, Governor Cadwallader of Wisconsin, Archbishop Tache of Manitoba, Bishop La Flesh of Canada, the Rev. Dr. Neill of St. Paul, Bishops Ireland and Grace, General R. W. Johnson, and not least of all the renowned general of the United States Army, William Tecumseh Sherman. Never again will any occasion bring this constellation of illustrious men together.

The splendid "*Inaugural Banquet*" given by the citizens of Minnesota to Governor Hubbard, on the evening of January 9, 1882, was an occasion of proud compliment to a brave soldier, a worthy citizen, and an accomplished gentleman, whom the people of the state had honored by calling him to fill the executive chair. It was only appropriate that General Sibley should preside at the banquet, and deliver the address of welcome, and, in the name of the state, salute the new governor, extending to him the cordial congratulations of the brilliant gathering.

Saturday evening, November 7, 1884, the "*Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the Advent of the Prince of Pioneers*" to Minnesota, a costly banquet, sumptuous with the choicest preparations, gay with floral decorations, and select with the presence of his warm admirers, among whom were the *élite* of the city of St. Paul, graced the ladies' ordinary at the Metropolitan Hotel. The tables, arranged on three sides of the room, brought the guests close together, General Sibley being seated in front of the centre table, and at the middle of the same, Commodore Kittson on his right, and Judge Nelson of the United States Circuit Court on his left. On the back of the bill of fare, beautiful and chaste, were printed the dates and words of congratulation:

1834.

1884.

**Gen'l Henry H. Sibley,**

*After fifty years of active and  
useful life in Minnesota, your  
friends congratulate you.*

METROPOLITAN HOTEL,

NOVEMBER 7, 1884.

Among the distinguished guests present on this occasion were men eminent in civil, political, and military life, Governor Hubbard, ex-Governor Ramsey, United States Senator McMillan, ex-Governor Davis, Judges Mitchell, Flandrau, Nelson, and Hall, Generals Averill, Johnson, and Sanborn, Hons. Kelly and Becker, besides others of note. The banquet ended, the guests rose to their feet, while Mr. P. R. L. Hardenbergh announced the toast of the evening in honor of General Sibley, no less than this,

**“Long Live the King!”**

A sentiment responded to by ex-Governor Davis, “in one of the neatest and most appropriate addresses ever delivered on such an occasion.”<sup>1</sup> In a brief response to the eloquent tribute by the ex-governor, General Sibley alluded to the scenes and events of years gone by, and closed his remarks with the following words:

“My public and private record has been made up, and faulty and imperfect as it may be, it is now too late to alter or amend it. I thank God that he has spared me to see the fiftieth anniversary of my advent to what is now Minnesota, and to witness the transformation of this region from a

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Globe, Saturday, November 8, 1884.

howling wilderness, tenanted alone by wild beasts and savage men, into a proud and powerful commonwealth; and I especially thank him for surrounding me in the evening of my days with troops of loving friends of both sexes, who overlook my many imperfections in their desire to smooth my pathway to the grave.

"It is a great consolation to me that I can at least leave my children the heritage of an honest name, and to my many friends a remembrance, not only of my devotion to them, but of my earnest and long-continued labors to advance the interests and welfare of our beloved Minnesota. God grant to each one of you a long life and a full measure of prosperity."<sup>1</sup>

Scenes and occasions like these occur but once in a lifetime, and are worthy of record in any history that recites even the fragments of a career impossible to be repeated.

The following year, 1885, General Sibley was elected president of the Minnesota Club, an association of the chief professional and business men of the city of St. Paul.

On Saturday, August 8, 1885, the memorable day that saw the national obsequies of that great commander, General Ulysses S. Grant, late president of the United States, Major General Sibley was chosen master of ceremonies at the capitol, in St. Paul, where 10,000 people were gathered to honor the illustrious dead. His *extempore* words on that occasion are worthy of preservation not less as a most appropriate tribute to the great departed, than as a memorial of the patriotic spirit of a man who, though differing in politics from him he eulogized, could yet appreciate his value, acknowledge his worth, and, lamenting with others his sad demise, bespeak his future fame:

"COMRADES, COMPANIONS, AND FELLOW CITIZENS: This is no ordinary occasion. On this day the citizens of the republic, at home and in foreign lands, irrespective of section, party, color, or creed, assemble to express their profound sorrow at the recent death of America's noblest citizen and most illustrious soldier. Never since the base assassination of the lamented President Lincoln has there been such an universal outburst of grief in all the states and territories of the Union as has been manifested since the announcement of the death of General Ulysses S. Grant. Nor by any means has it been confined to our own people or our own race. Great Britain has signalized the sad event by memorial services in Westminster Abbey, participated in by the most distinguished individuals of every class in the kingdom. Expressions of deep sympathy have emanated from the rulers of European nations, and, indeed, from all parts of the world. Such honors paid to the memory of a private citizen have never before been so universally accorded, and it may with confidence be predicted, never again will be while the world stands. We may well inquire how it is that the demise of the

<sup>1</sup> Pen Pictures of St. Paul, Minn.

late commander-in-chief of our armies, and subsequent president for two successive terms, has created so profound an impression of sorrow upon the whole civilized world. Magnificent as were his achievements on the battlefield, there have been others whose success has been equally marvelous. As a statesman, history has embalmed the names of many who were his superiors in that capacity, and as a man he was not exempt from the frailties of our common humanity. But in that silent, apparently stolid, man there were embodied sterling qualities that the force of circumstances developed from time to time, and which won the hearts, even of those who had manfully fought him through a long and bloody war. In the hour of victory he did not exult over or seek to humiliate a gallant but fallen foe. He cast his shield of protection over the captive generals, against the determination of politicians in high station to bring them to the scaffold. The treatment he extended to the conquered Southerners was far more lenient than they had dared to hope for, and by his wise and magnanimous course, he accomplished more in reviving their latent loyalty to the Union than all other causes combined. No marvel then that their feelings are stirred to the profoundest depths at the loss of him who had proved himself to be their friend in times of direst need.

“General Grant was a modest man. He affected none of the ‘pomp and circumstance of glorious war.’ Indeed, he regarded war between civilized nations as a relic of barbarism, and his well-known efforts to induce the great powers to submit all grave questions to the decision of an international tribunal, evinced the sincerity of his desire for the prevalence of peace. He did not hesitate to attribute the success in the field more to the gallantry of the officers and soldiers of his command than to any merit of his own, and he was prompt to do justice to the victim of inadvertent or premeditated wrong when satisfied that such wrong had been done. General Grant was charged, during the war, with being prodigal of the lives of his soldiers, but the result demonstrated that the sacrifice, however painful, was unavoidable. The fate of the Union of these states was at stake. A powerful enemy, under the guidance of skillful and determined leaders, was bent on its destruction, and it was only to be prevented by a series of bloody conflicts, and an enormous expenditure of human life. To effect this vital object, General Grant spared neither himself nor those under his command, for he and they were determined to conquer or to die. Better, far better, to fall in battle than, defeated, to live citizens, or subjects, as the case might be, of a dissevered and discordant country, and cease to belong to one of the leading powers of the world. It was during the last few months of his life, while suffering from a malignant and incurable disease, that there were developed traits of character in General Grant that still more endeared him to his countrymen. The indomitable will which enabled him, even while enduring agonizing pain, to continue his labors, and happily to finish his memoirs; the all-embracing charity he manifested for his fellow men, the keen desire, so often expressed, that sectional feeling should be allayed, and that the people of the North and South might once more meet as brethren and as Americans; the devotion he displayed to his dear wife and children, and the sublime and child-like patience and resignation with which he submitted to his inevitable doom. These traits were daily

spread before the public in all their details, until men, women, and children throughout the land became alike interested, and hoped to the last and prayed that his precious life might be prolonged. But the fiat of the Almighty had gone forth, and the spirit of General Grant returned to him who gave it. We mourn his loss, but we have the consolation of knowing that his name and fame will be venerated as long as the republic survives, with those of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln."

In the spring of 1886, General Sibley was invited to prepare a lecture on the pioneers of Western civilization, and reminiscences of early times in Minnesota, and delivered the same in the month of May, before the Young Men's Christian Association of St. Paul, at their special request.

September 1, 1887, brought the "*First Quarter-Centennial Reunion and Banquet*" of the heroes who had survived the memorable disaster and victory at Birch Coolie, September 2, 1862. The gathering in St. Paul was one of intense interest, and General Sibley, whose "midnight march" and "morning charge" redeemed the desperate situation, presided, once more, with his accustomed dignity and grace. Among the survivors present on this occasion, in addition to their chief, were Governor William R. Marshall, Judge James J. Egan, Colonel William Crooks, Adjutant A. P. Connolly, Colonel H. P. Grant, W. H. Grant, E. S. Beck, W. Baigner, H. Martin, W. Weed, W. Hart, D. McCauley, Sergeant Gardner, P. Brunelle, F. Trefan, James Auge, and others, who recalled and recited to each other the incidents of that wellnigh ruinous mistake of encampment, yet decisive engagement with the same murderous tribe by whom, in later days, Custer and his three hundred dragoons were massacred in the valley of the Little Big Horn. As was to be expected, all praised their loved commander, and the whole company entered, heart and soul, into the description given by the eloquent attorney, Judge Egan, as he pictured the crisis, saying, "McPhail's distant artillery cheered the surrounded men, a little, about noon, but this soon ceased, and another awful night was passed, fortunately without attack. Every man expected to die on the morrow, but as the Indians prepared for the final rush, the roar of Sibley's guns was heard, and the hero of Mendota, with his gallant men, swept up,

"Like eagles to their prey;  
And carrion-kite, and jay-bird,  
Fled, screaming, far away!"

In May, 1888, General Sibley was unanimously elected commander of the Loyal Legion of the State of Minnesota, and June 7, 1888, decorated with the emblems of his office, the chief justice of the supreme court of the state holding the second place, a tribute offered not as a matter of mere routine, but as a cordial recognition of invaluable service rendered to the state and to the nation.

The "*Grand Annual Reception and Banquet of the Loyal Legion*," when the magnates of the state and many distinguished guests, both civil and military, met at this date in full force, in the capacious rooms of the Hotel Ryan, to install General Sibley into the high office of "Commander of the Legion," ought not to pass unnoticed. His ancestors had belonged to the ancient "Order of the Cincinnati," formed at the close of the Revolutionary War, and it was fitting that their illustrious descendant should be invested with the chief dignity in an organization of not less importance and renown. The dining room of the hotel and its approaches were decorated with a profusion of the national and state bunting, and the choicest productions of the florist's skill, displayed in the most tasteful arrangement. Under a canopy of silk American flags shone the celebrated picture of "Sheridan's Ride," representing the great general on his black charger, bounding from Winchester to the battle-field, twenty miles away. Portraits of Generals J. B. Sanborn, W. R. Marshall, H. H. Sibley, and ex-Governor Ramsey, the great "War Governor," hung at the head of the stairway, surmounted by a shield bearing the heraldry of the commandery, and supported by the standard of the Legion embroidered in gold. On the large mantelpiece of the corridor the great American eagle spread his outstretched wings. Flowering plants and shrubs stood everywhere, and a brilliant assemblage of ladies added beauty to the splendor of the scene. The Third Infantry band, stationed in the rotunda, discoursed the national music with stirring effect, and, during the banquet, an orchestra from the same charmed the ears of the delighted guests. The *menu* card bore the following lines:

"Halt the column, rest a moment,  
Stack the guns, the fires light,  
Here is foraging in plenty,  
Let us bivouac here to-night."

The stores of the commissary department having been thoroughly discussed, ex-Governor Marshall delivered an appro-



priate eulogy upon the life and career of the commander elect, General Sibley, referring in high terms also to ex-Governor Ramsey and ex-Senator Henry M. Rice, who were among the distinguished personages of the evening. General Sibley then made the "Address of Welcome," and announced his acceptance of the high honor conferred upon him, expressing his great satisfaction at the sight of so many of his old comrades who had shared with him the dangers and the victories of the Sioux War of 1862 and 1863. At the close of his address, the following poem, greeted with applause at its conclusion by the whole company, was read by Captain Henry Castle, in honor of General Sibley:

#### OUR NEW COMMANDER.

Companions! why the grateful words withhold  
That leap to voice our heart-throbs' loyal swell?  
We, honoring, honored are; let lips be bold  
In tribute to the name we love so well.

Our new commander! Let the record gleam  
With blazonry of all his fame and worth!  
No risk of chance or change. No fear of him —  
Rock-buttressed as the pedestals of earth.

In mettled youth the stalwart pioneer  
Who strode the forests; scaled the dizzy steep;  
Taught the swart savage justice to revere,  
And plowed the path of empire wide and deep.

In early manhood builder of the state —  
A leader and a master, laying down  
The rod and rifle for the realm sedate  
Of legislator — and the civic crown.

In life's ripe prime the soldier, whose strong arm  
To periled thousands wrought deliverance,  
Whose cool and prudent prowess quelled alarm  
As quailed the foe before his angry glance.

In stately age the counselor and friend,  
The splendid model of our men to be.  
Serenest sage! Gentlest of gentlemen!  
Fit autumn for the summer's fulgency.

His past secure in history's golden urn,  
Honored and loved through all life's shining span,  
His future safe — late be he ours to mourn  
The first and noblest Minnesotian.

Such praise, cordial as unanimous, and true as deserved, was a fitting accompaniment to the investiture of General Sibley with the chief dignity of the commandery.

Honors, however, of a different and not less illustrious character,—honors academic and literary,—from one of the oldest and most distinguished American institutions in the East, and of world-wide fame, began to greet him, in recognition not only of his military merit but of his civil services, his high personal character, and what he had achieved for the cause of education in the State of Minnesota. June 19, 1888, the following telegram was received by General Sibley from Professor Magie of Princeton College, New Jersey:

PRINCETON, June 19, 1888.

*To General Henry Hastings Sibley,*

DEAR SIR: I am directed to announce to you that you have been elected, unanimously, a member of the Clisophic Society of Princeton. Please notify us of your acceptance.

W. T. MAGIE,  
*Professor.*

This announcement, startling and unexpected, was followed by another, six days later, viz.:

PRINCETON, June 25, 1888.

*Hon. Henry H. Sibley,*

DEAR SIR: The degree of Doctor of Laws, LL.D., has been unanimously conferred upon you by the trustees of Princeton College, on the ground of your high personal character, scholarly attainments, and eminent public services, civil, military, and educational.

A. F. WEST,  
*Professor.*

This yet more unexpected communication was accompanied by an official notice of the fact from the secretary of the board of trustees, as follows:

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, June 26, 1888.

*The Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, LL.D.,*

MY DEAR SIR: It gives me great pleasure to announce that, at their last meeting, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on you by the trustees of the College of New Jersey.

Very Truly Yours,  
D. R. FRAZER,  
*Clerk pro tem.*

To this communication, General Sibley replied, in the following terms:

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA,  
REGENTS' OFFICE, ST. PAUL, July 3, 1888.

*D. B. Frazer, Clerk pro tem., Newark, New Jersey,*

MY DEAR SIR: Your esteemed favor of the twenty-sixth ultimo, notifying me, formally, of the action of the trustees of the College of New Jersey, conferring upon me the honorary degree of "Doctor of Laws," was duly received. In accepting this unexpected honor, permit me to express my high appreciation of the compliment thus paid me by the authorities of one of the oldest, if not the oldest, and most famous of the institutions of the East, and my grateful thanks therefor.

Very Truly Yours,  
HENRY H. SIBLEY.

In addition to the formal notification, a personal congratulation was forwarded to General Sibley, by the Rev. Francis L. Patton, D.D., LL.D., the newly inducted president of the institution, and which was duly acknowledged:

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, June 28, 1888.

*Hon. H. H. Sibley,*

MY DEAR SIR: I was greatly pleased to learn that, just before my own induction into office, and transfer, under the administration of Dr. McCosh, the trustees of Princeton College had conferred upon you the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (*Legum Doctor*). I write only to express my own pleasure that the highest academic title in the gift of the college has been so worthily bestowed, and that, among those who will henceforth represent us, in your state, is one whose services to the state are so universally known and appreciated. Official notification of the action of the trustees will have been received, in all probability, ere this, through the clerk of the board. I am,

Very Faithfully Yours,  
FRANCIS L. PATTON.

The diploma, in witness of the honor conferred, and bearing the official seal, displayed on the colors of William of Nassau, the Prince of Orange, was duly transmitted, and as duly acknowledged. A fac-simile of the parchment is seen on the opposite page.

**Præses et Curatores Collegii Hen. Nassariensis,  
Omnibus has literas lecturis,**

**PLURIMAM SALUTEM.**

Quandoquidem eorum sit et rationi prorsus consentaneum ut ii, qui labore et studio donas artes didicerunt, præmiis suis meritis dignè referant, ac ut et ipsis donis sit et aliorum provocator industria, quando etiam hæc potissimum spectant amplissima illa jura nostro Collegio publico diplomate collata;

Quamquam Henrica Hastings Bibley Praes. Vobis. Vobis. Vir sit non tantum moribus inculpatus, literis humanioribus penitus instructus, sed etiam sibi tantum in rebus ad optimam eruditionem pertinentibus cognitionem acquisiverit, et summos publicos honores probo mereatur.

Idcirco notum sit omnibus quod nos, Senatus-consulto Academico, supradictum Nomen — Bibley titulo prædignus Legum Doctoris adornandum et dehinc pro Doctore volumus.

CUJUS REI hæc membrana sigillo nostri Collegii rata et nominibus Praesidis et Scribae munita testimonio sit.

Datum Aulae Nassovicae

XII. Kalendas Julii,

Anno Domini MDCCCLXXVIII.

{Seal}

James McCosh, Praes.

E. R. Brannen, Scriba.

It was but natural that the distinguished president of the University of Minnesota, present, at the time, in New Haven, Connecticut, and seeing in the public press the announcement of the honor conferred upon the president of the board of regents of the University of Minnesota, should hasten to transmit his own congratulations to the recipient of so eminent an honor. With a warm pulse-beat, Dr. Northrop sent to General Sibley the following tribute, as handsome as it was brief, cordial, and appropriate:

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, June 30, 1888.

MY DEAR GENERAL SIBLEY: Accept my hearty congratulations on the well-deserved honor you have received. After an acquaintance of four years with you, I am prepared to say that I know of no honor which *could* be conferred on you which would not be deserved.

Very Truly Yours,

CYRUS NORTHROP.

The board of regents of the University of Minnesota also placed on record the following preamble and resolution:

WHEREAS, The honorable title of Doctor of Laws has been conferred, by the College of New Jersey, upon the president of this board, the Hon. H. H. Sibley, it is hereby

*Resolved*, That this board approves with special gratification this recognition of our fellow citizen who has eminently served our state from its earliest organization, with his sword in defense of our homes on the frontier, with his counsel as our representative in the halls of Congress, and as our chief executive, and who now consents to give us his last years to building up a university which will emulate the merits and renown of the institution which has so honored him.

How thoroughly the great compliment paid to General Sibley, by Princeton, was appreciated by the public press of the city of St. Paul, echoing as it did the sentiment of this state, may be learned from the following editorial which appeared in the *Pioneer Press*, June 30, 1888:

St. Paul's eminent citizen, the oldest pioneer, distinguished alike for his services to the state and to the country, Hon. Henry H. Sibley, has just been crowned with two wreaths, placed upon his head by one of the most celebrated among our Eastern literary institutions. The College of New Jersey, with her eminent faculty and board of directors and trustees, has unanimously conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LL.D.), at its recent commencement, upon General Sibley, while the Cliosophic Society of Princeton has, at the same time, elected him an honorary member of its learned fraternity. Among the directors and professors of this institution, in whose presidential chair have sat men like Witherspoon, Jonathan Edwards, and McCosh, and whose present chief is Dr. Patton, conceded to be the first dialectician of the age, are many who are familiar with the his-

tory of Minnesota and the career of General Sibley. The compliment to this distinguished citizen, first in the territory and first in the state, will be appreciated by the entire state, and remembered with delight. The only question is whether General Sibley is more honored in receiving, or Princeton more honored in bestowing, the distinction.

The State University, of whose board of regents General Sibley has so long been the head, will, though Princeton has stolen a march on it in this matter, undoubtedly regard the honor as due to itself. The alumni of Princeton will feel proud because its laurels are won by one than whom there is none more admired, or loved for his attainments, services, or personal worth, in the state. The Territory of Minnesota, the legislature of Minnesota, the judiciary of Minnesota, the civil and military organizations and various public institutions and charities of Minnesota, have heaped honors on his head.

To the same purpose, the *Daily Globe*, same date, added its commendation, in the following terms:

We congratulate our esteemed citizen, General Sibley, full of honors as of years, upon this distinguished compliment to his merit, from a source second to none for eminence in the whole country. These honors he has received are honors worth having. The "Clio" is reputed as one of the most celebrated literary societies in the United States, and has a roll of eminent names, many of whom are of world-wide fame. The board of trustees of Princeton is composed of a large body of eminent scholars, historians, jurists, divines, and professors, among whom are Drs. McCosh and Patton, and gentlemen of the first wealth and standing in New York and Philadelphia, and other cities in the East. Three honors in three weeks! "Commander Loyal Legion," "Member of the Princeton Clio," and "Doctor of Laws!" *Palmarum qui meruit ferat!* Let him, who has deserved the palm, take it!

The natural outgrowth of such testimonials of esteem as these, and their effect and influence upon the hearts of all connected with the university, may well be imagined. The following year, after passing through a severe illness, the honored president of the board of regents made his appearance, June 6, 1889, at the university commencement, when once more he became the subject of a grand ovation. He was introduced to the crowded assembly by President Northrop in a handsome speech that developed the electricity into a blaze most brilliant and exciting:

"At the mention of General Sibley's name, the entire audience rose, and made the welkin ring with cheers. The recipient of this signal honor was visibly affected, and the hardy patriarch, whose biography is the history of Minnesota, found himself overcome by the occasion."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Dispatch, June 7, 1889.

The intelligence of this well-merited tribute no sooner reached the ears of the Right Reverend E. S. Thomas, S.T.D., Bishop of Kansas,—an old friend of General Sibley,—than the following beautiful appreciation of it was sent, on wings, to General Sibley's home:

SALINA, KANSAS, July 6, 1889.

MY DEAR GENERAL SIBLEY: Last evening, my son George informed me of the handsome tribute which President Northrop gave you on commencement day of the university. It made my heart thrill with pride and joy. It is such a pleasure to know that a true man and a noble life may have their due meed of praise, now, and their worth openly recognized, before the shroud of death calls for a fitting eulogy. Mrs. Thomas sends affectionate regards.

Your Very Sincere Friend,  
E. T. THOMAS

To crown all, the following editorial appeared in the *Daily Globe* about the same time, and testifies to a sentiment that, one day, perhaps not far hence, may find its realization in the actual consummation for which it pleads. No citizen will say that it does not deserve a ready consideration:

The *Globe* publishes this morning an article descriptive of Mendota, where the earliest white settlement in Minnesota was made, and where the first house was built by General Sibley. The structure is still standing, and its builder is still living. The town of Mendota, the venerable stone mansion, and the name of Henry H. Sibley are all inseparably associated with the history of Minnesota. It is therefore with all the more freedom that the *Globe* makes the following suggestion:

Who General Sibley is and what he has been to Minnesota is known of everybody. Panegyrics on an illustrious name are not necessary in the presence of a people who have personal knowledge of the deeds of the man. So what we have to say we will at, directly, without the form of further introduction. The *Globe's* suggestion is that the piece of ground known as Pilot Knob be at once secured, and that ten or fifteen acres, or as much of it as may be necessary for the purposes, be devoted to the use of a public park, in the midst of which, and curving the summit of the Knob, shall be erected a monument to General Sibley. That General Sibley deserves a monument from the people of Minnesota, goes without question. That Pilot Knob is the most appropriate place for a monument to General Sibley's memory is made plain in the *Globe's* Mendota article. It should stand on the eminence directly overlooking the little pioneer town where the first white man's home was built in Minnesota and in full view of these two great cities.

Following close on the heels of the *Globe's* suggestion to build the Sibley monument on Pilot Knob comes the question, Who will inaugurate the movement? There are, perhaps, scores of our public-spirited citizens who will cheerfully give it substantial aid. The *Globe* itself would only be too



proud to be a leader in such a movement. But there is a fitness in all things. And in this instance it is appropriate that the honor of the initial movement shall belong to the old settlers. The surviving pioneers who shared with Sibley the privations of frontier life, and who still live to enjoy with him the exceeding glory of their joint achievements, are the ones to inaugurate a movement to do honor to the name and memory of their old leader and to Minnesota's earliest and best friend. The *Globe* has made the suggestion. Now let the old settlers take hold of it and put it into practical shape.

It would be difficult to find another among the honored pioneers of Minnesota, more worthy of such a mark of public esteem than the Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, whom the Territory of Wisconsin, the Territory of Minnesota, and the State of Minnesota by her people, her judiciary, her legislature, her university, her civil, military, commercial, financial, municipal, and charitable, institutions have already adorned with so many tokens of their continuous and undiminished regard. As a civilian, the first in so many important respects, and of such moment in the infancy of Minnesota, and as a soldier, the redeemer of so many of her captives from the grasp of a brutal foe, he shines with untarnished honors, and keeps the ensigns of his worth, neither assumed nor laid aside at the caprice of the popular breath.

He, all-indifferent to the spurns  
Of vulgar souls profane,  
The honors wears he proudly earns,  
Unclouded by a stain;  
Nor takes, nor lays the *fasces* down  
As fickle mobs applaud or frown.

*Intaminatis fulget honoribus,  
Nec sumit, nec ponit, secures,  
Arbitrio popularis auræ.*

— Horace, Odes, Lib. III, Ode II.

## CHAPTER XL

**RESUMÉ OF THE CAREER OF H. H. SIBLEY.—SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MR. SIBLEY.—INTELLECTUALITY.—A STATESMAN, ORATOR, DEBATER.—MORAL ATTRIBUTES.—RELIGIOUS ELEMENT.—LITERARY MERIT.—CONTRIBUTOR.—DESCRIPTIVE POWER.—EPISTOLARY POWER.—LETTER TO COSTANTINE BELTRAMI.—POETICAL PROPENSITY OF GENERAL SIBLEY.—HIS POEM "THEN AND NOW."—ELEGANT TRIBUTES.—TRIBUTE TO COLONEL HERCULES L. DOUSMAN.—TRIBUTE TO MAJOR JOSEPH B. BROWN.—PARTIAL LIST OF GENERAL SIBLEY'S WRITINGS.—HIS LOVE OF THE ROMANTIC AND BEAUTIFUL IN NATURE.—WORDSWORTH'S LINES.—EXPRESSION OF HIS SENTIMENT.—LOVE OF THE COMICAL, ILLUSTRATED.—HIS BENEVOLENCE AND BENEFICENCE.—SYMPATHY WITH HIS FELLOW MAN.—WORTHY OF PRESENT PRAISE, WHILE LIVING.—THE HOME OF MR. SIBLEY AT MENDOTA.—THE HOME OF MR. SIBLEY AT ST. PAUL.—HIS SOCIAL LIFE.—PLACES CALLED BY HIS NAME.—PRESENT FAMILY, AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS IN ST. PAUL.—CLOSING WORDS.—TRIBUTE TO HENRY HASTINGS, BY THE WRITER.—PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.**

IN the foregoing chapters, we have spoken of the ancestral lines of Henry Hastings Sibley, both English and American, giving special prominence to both. We have traced the history in outline, backward to the Norman Conquest, forward to the time of the Winthrop Fleet, and thence to the period when the subject of this narrative was a babe, a year old, a prisoner in British hands. We have seen his early proclivities, and followed his career from the time he left his paternal roof to the time of the present writing, a period of seventy-eight years. Freed from his mother's knee, we have watched him pursuing his juvenile, and next, his classic, education; then turning away from his home, in his seventeenth year, to seek his fortune; a clerk and justice of the peace at the Sault Ste. Marie and at Mackinac; a partner next in the Great American Fur Company; a pioneer in Minnesota; chief inspector of the trading posts of the fur company throughout the whole Northwest; justice of the peace, again, over a region large as the Empire of France; foreman of the first grand jury west of the Mississippi; an Indian hunter for many years; a business man; a delegate to Congress from the residuary portion of Wisconsin; securing the passage of the bill organizing Minnesota Territory; a delegate from the Territory

of Minnesota, devoted to its interests, and winning for himself the praise of all; presiding officer of the Democratic branch of the state convention, met to form the state constitution; first governor of the State of Minnesota, defending the honor and struggling to support the credit of the state; a soldier next, leading the forces of the state to avenge the great Sioux massacre of 1862; a second time leading a second expedition, in 1863, and returning again victorious from the field; the deliverer of Minnesota's captives from the grasp of a savage foe; organizer of a commission to try the Indian criminals; a member, not only of the territorial, but also of the state, legislature; appointed by various presidents of the United States to negotiate treaties with the Indian tribes, and again with others to supervise the entire operations of the Indian department. We have seen him also locating the capitol of the state, giving to Minnesota river, and to the state, their names; assisting to form the first Protestant church ever formed in the region before it became a territory; building the first church edifice ever built west of the Mississippi; a friend of the missionaries, contributing to their support; battling for pre-emption rights and a homestead for all; pleading for the insane; securing large appropriations for the territory, and a double share for the purposes of school education; two townships for the purpose of a university; a colonel, a brigadier, a major general; president of the board of regents of the State University, doctor of laws, and a citizen crowned with numerous and distinguished honors, civil, political, military, and academic; a man respected and beloved by the people, and living to almost an octogenarian age, witnessing wonders such as no other man has seen, in the development of the Northwest. In all these changing and diversified relations, he has passed before us, not as a phantom figure, but a real character, exciting our interest, and challenging our admiration, at every step of his many-sided, unique, and marvelous career.

It remains, in a closing chapter, to devote some space, more critically than the previous connected narrative would permit, to the intellectual, moral, æsthetic, and religious features of General Sibley, his character as a man and a statesman, a public orator and debater, a literary author, as also to note his benevolence and charities, his home, to number his family and family connections in the city of St. Paul, and, with some closing observations, retire from our labor.

A marked characteristic of General Sibley's mind is its broad *intellectuality*, a mind deep yet clear as the crystal in which the scenery of trees and sky, and the objects of nature, are reflected with the utmost distinctness and perfection. If, as Buffon remarks, "the style is the man," this must go undisputed. If not merely the flow of his pellucid language, but the thoughts covered by the words are an index of the mental quality behind them, General Sibley's style of expression, and the culture it betrays besides, will rank him as among the best thinkers of his time. On whatever theme he speaks or has spoken, or writes or has written, there is a breadth of comprehension and a grasp of its widest and deepest relations, with a clear statement of his subject, such as evinces an intellectual power scarcely inferior to that of men we are accustomed to regard as among the first and ablest of our time. The transparency of the vesture with which his ideas are clothed may deceive superficial minds, as might the charm of their simplicity, and the ease with which they flow in language where no word is misplaced, and none mistaken,—a diction select and appropriate,—but better minds, versed in such mysteries, will not be misled in their judgment of the merits both of the thinker and the thought, by the clearness of the utterance. To read his speeches, one would think they had been elaborated with the utmost care, and delivered only after they had been committed to a faithful memory. And, were it not that the same facility of utterance, and force of intellect, and faultlessness of style, emerge everywhere on all occasions, even when called upon to speak *impromptu*, and unexpectedly, it might be difficult to evade a conclusion which ten minutes' conversation with their gifted author would overthrow. This much is due, in a general way, to his intellectuality, which if not as quick now, nearly at the close of four-score years, is yet as observable as when in its prime.

As a *statesman*, judged by his congressional career, the development of his mind was of the first order. He penetrated to the foundation of things, examining the principles of human action, studying the structure of society, its various forms of government, the genius of institutions, the character of constitutions and of laws, the relation of the federal to the state authority, the results of legislation, the histories of states, empires, and republics, the rights of man, and the general progress of the world. Endowed with a meditative

and reflective disposition, and sharing his father's judicial aptitude, his opinions as to the character of his times, the tendencies of great forces then in action,—not alone in the United States, but everywhere in the civilized world,—became of real value to those who sought his counsel. Gifted, moreover, with that prophetic foresight which is grounded in a logical deduction from the knowledge of the world's past course, and a keen perception of impulses wrapped up in its present motion, he framed to himself a "philosophy of progress" which he believed the experience of future years would verify, in the rapid evolution of the American people. It was that character of mind which restrained him from siding with the extreme South in the Civil War, and also awoke the grand conception of a North and South linked together as one, in coming time, commercially as well as agriculturally, by a gigantic railroad from the Gulf of Mexico to the British line. The old and narrow notions of natural enmity, hereditary feuds, and sectional antagonisms, with practically independent petty sovereignties, such as clannish Highlanders, imperial barons, and savage Indians, entertain, he deemed worthy to be banished from the temper of the people, and from the politics of the times. Radical for the removal of every inherent wrong, and of all things adverse to man's improvement,—let his color be red, black, white, or yellow,—he was yet a wise counselor, cautious and safe, opposed to all volcanic action, save as a last resort, handling practically, as a statesman, and not theoretically, as a romancer, the great questions of his day, and regulating his procedure by guides and considerations of a wise experience. The tenor of his life, habitually temperate, made him all the more industrious and constant in the distribution of his time, and enabled him to be a thorough master of all the details of such business as required his attention. He was posted in territorial and state affairs far beyond the majority of the house, when he entered it, although well informed men were there. Punctual to his engagements, and hourly diligent, he was ever ready, whenever a crisis demanded his special intervention, to make his appearance, leap into "the imminent deadly breach," and even lead a hope almost "forlorn." Patient and persevering, he was determined, on all occasions, to deserve success, even if on some occasions he did not succeed. He ever stood rooted in his creed, not wavering with

circumstances, nor veering with the wind. Even the necessity of self-preservation, the first law of nature, could not warp his judgment to affirm a proposition, which the text of the Constitution, and the plighted faith of the states, demonstrated to be false. In the issue between North and South, while he gave the legal case to the South, so far as the rendition of the fugitive was concerned, he stood by the North on the ground of the integrity of the Union, and drew his sword in defense of his state. The "neutrality" to which, in the feeble beginning, and critical time of the birth of the *territory*, he committed himself, was no evasion of principles he was well understood to hold, but grounded itself in the non-existence of political organizations among his constituents, the pledge of non-partisan representation, and the highest good of the people. It was based on moral not less than political reasons. The same courage displayed itself here, as later on, at the birth of the *state*, when all neutrality was thrown aside, and he stood foremost as the leader of the party whose fundamental principles he has ever regarded as those of the people and country, and indestructible so long as popular government lasts. Whether in ascension, or in retirement, he remained steadfast to the Constitution and the laws, loyal to the government, conservative yet tolerant, discriminating yet indulgent. Like all men of any real greatness, he was, while dignified, yet condescending and affable, easy of approach, simple, sociable, genial, enthusiastic, and cordial in all his personal relationships. His influence with men, even the leaders of diverse parties, was great, and it acquired strength all the more, under the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, the times in which he lived, and the interests committed to his hands, when it was discovered that, not merely the minor obstacles thrown in his path gave him no concern, but that, rising superior to the party passions of the hour, and the base undergrowth of selfish ends, he could be a patriot and not a partisan, refusing to sacrifice, to political entanglements, the interests his constituents had committed to his trust.

As a *public speaker*, he deserves a place among the first that Minnesota has produced, different indeed from all the rest by the whole difference of mental and moral constitution that obtains between one man and another. He had, moreover, studied the best models of his own and former genera-

tions. He had read, with care, the orations of a Chatham and Pitt, a Burke and Sheridan, a Curran and Fox, a Grattan and Emmet. He pored over the productions of a Webster and Clay, an Everett and Choate, a Benton and Calhoun, and was familiar not only with Douglas and Foote, but with the first orators in both the senate and the house of representatives. He delighted, besides, to study the pages of a Rollin and Gibbon, a Hallam and Alison, storing his memory with the records of ancient and modern history. The English and French poets were his companions. His knowledge was not confined to the ordinary accomplishments of an English education, but extended to the classic authors, the source of his exquisite taste, and perhaps of the "*ore rotundo*" character of his expressions. In all these great models, he discovered the existence of a great principle which was constitutional to himself, and a chief source of their success, viz.: a firmness of purpose and resolution in the pursuit of their object. Whatever they willed to do they "*willed it with a will*," undismayed by any opposition, how formidable soever it might be. We see this element not only in the maiden speech of Mr. Sibley before the house Committee on Elections, but eminently so in his speeches on the "pre-emption and homestead bills," and still more strongly in the struggle whereby five roads were saved to Minnesota. Once, and again, he bore the brunt of the whole combined attack upon him, and held his position with a tenacity which, at last, was crowned with victory.

He was, admittedly, one of the most effective speakers in the house. He never rose to discuss a great question of constitutional government, state or territorial right, public economy, the rights of delegates, the interpretation of the Constitution, internal improvement, or national policy of any kind, that he did not command the attention of the representatives, and was even entreated by members of the house to address that body. Tall, stately, well formed, and of commanding personal appearance, erect, dignified, urbane, and even courteous, in his manners, self-possessed and deliberate, wearing the look of conscious power, he challenged, and received, the respect of all. He conveyed the impression, always, that he was master of his subject. His voice blended the harmonies of the pathetic and the strong, the tender and the grave, and, in the presentation and enforcement of his cause, he touched not less the sympathies than enlightened the understanding



and persuaded the mind of his hearers. Sometimes, he rose to the height of an intense and burning eloquence, as when pleading for the pioneer, and the red man, or exposing the perfidy of the government and its officials. He had a divine memory, an affluent diction, a lucid order, a consistent method, a fullness of historic fact, an aptitude for illustration, a power of description, a simplicity of action, and naturalness of gesture, an animation chastened by good taste, a flow of the deepest feeling, a weight in his words, a gravity of mien even when excited, and a faculty of shedding over questions of state policy and government the high light imparted by their moral associations. His speeches show that he felt the speaker was not the only person actively engaged while a speech is in progress, but that the audience are in action as well, and that not merely must the intellect be informed but the affections moved, and the will determined in the direction proposed. A mere didactic orator he could never be. A passive audience he could never have. Elevated, commanding, and composed, he yet became, when the time required it, impassioned, and overmastering. His severity he reserved for those public occasions when, in Congress, legislature, or through the public press, or when addressing his fellow citizens, whether from the state or national capitol, or at the market place, vice was to be made dance under the lash,—honor, justice, truth, and fidelity to covenants to be vindicated,—the name of the state to be redeemed from infamy,—corrupt politicians exposed,—corporations frustrated in their schemes of plunder,—and public officials held to just accountability. His invective was terrible, his denunciation scathing. His sentences were framed to hold as much dynamite as possible, and his force was used to hurl it with the most destructive effect. The eye that could “stare a buffalo out of countenance” glared. At such times it was a joy to him to see his shells explode just where he intended them to go, and the splinters fly just where they were least expected. On other occasions, when speaking in praise of the good, he was like a bow on the cloud or the clear shining of the sun after rain.

His speeches on the “Indian question” and the “homestead bill” are models of pathetic eloquence in many passages, and of scorching indignation in others. That on the “reduction of the military reservation of Fort Snelling,” reclaiming, from a military to a civil jurisdiction, Minnesota’s

best acres, pleading for the pioneer, and the territory, and that on the "indigent insane," crushing a scheme to allow the states to select for themselves Minnesota's best lands for their own benefit, are specimens of intellectual power, and withering rebuke. And what adds enduring value to these efforts is the fact that, in them all, the orator is not contented with mere material interests, nor talks in the terms of a mere calculator of material industries and advantages, nor as a speculating politician, but rises to the height of asserting the demands of natural justice, and enforcing the principles of eternal right.

As a *debater*, General Sibley was not surpassed. He was matched against the most accomplished men in the house, nor once came out second best in any dialectical encounter. A half-hour's analysis of his gladiatorial exercises, as seen in the congressional records, will let this, also, go unquestioned. He was never vanquished by attack, and his reply was frequently more powerful than his first presentation. Mason, Boyden, Stevens, and Root, were witnesses of that. They experienced also the power of General Sibley in retort. As to his mode of reasoning, in debate, if, from the structure of his mind so broad and comprehensive, and the flow of his language, Ciceronian and Johnsonian in its periods, it was not sharp, short, and precise, like the logic of Calhoun, or the terse sentences of Douglas, but more like that of Burke or Erskine, it was none the less effective. It prevented too rapid a motion in the mind of his hearers, too exhaustive an attention, and made the comprehension of the argument all the more easy. If the web of the argument was extended, its texture was none the less tough. If it moved, like a river cutting its channel ever deeper, and widening its banks by the gathering forces of its flowing and increasing waters, still it never wearied the ears that listened to its roll, nor brought slumber to eyes that watched its motion. Cogent and convincing, with one aim before him, he pressed onward, by a faultless dialectic, to achieve his victory. No empty sentence escaped his lips. He never strayed from the thread of his argument. His facts were never overstated. His points were never broken. His clinching demonstrations were never refuted. In the hottest of the contest his suavity of manner never forsook his bravery of action. If *votes* overbore *reason*, and he lost, in the first encounter, he yet returned to the

charge, undaunted by opposition, and undeterred by defeat. He was ready to meet, single-handed, any antagonism that offered itself to his attentions. As a *parliamentarian*, he was skillful to wield the "previous question," and, as an honorable *strategist*, he knew how to corner the house and bring its leaders to his feet!

The *moral attributes* that shone, conspicuously, in General Sibley's whole career, have been matters of universal comment, and unqualified commendation. The recurrence of almost daily eulogies in reference to this phenomenon in the life of a public man, amid the temptations of our age, when recklessness of principle is seen among so many of our public men, reminds us, strongly, of like eulogies, under like circumstances, by the Greeks and Romans, upon men whose virtues escaped the seductions around them; eulogies of virtue, even in the very bosom of Pagandom before Christianity was born, and whereby men won for themselves an enduring name. We recall the character of the elder Cato, the story of Regulus, and the life of Socrates; their adherence to truth, honesty, and justice, fidelity to covenants, the sanctity of promises, and their freedom from corruption. It is Sallust who can think of nothing nobler for the Roman youth than to imitate the noble deeds of their fathers, turning away from the crimes of the age, nor satisfied so long as the virtues of the dead were more than those of the living. By such high example, he sought to recover from ruin the generation almost hopelessly destroyed by its own excesses, its political venality, luxurious vice, and sacrifice of all things for the sake of conquest, pleasure, and power. If we seek to catalogue these virtues, so much to be praised, we shall find them no other than what an inspired writer has summed up under the rubrics of "*whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report,*"<sup>1</sup>—pagan virtues to the height of which, at least, all Christian men should aspire.

That General Sibley's record, in this respect, stands unimpeachable, none will be willing to deny. He looms everywhere, as a man of unbending integrity, displaying in his life the highest moral virtues. His veracity and honor, his love of justice and equity, and his purity of motive, pass unchallenged. The slave of no mean avarice or thirst for promotion, he has been indifferent to emolument, not stooping to

<sup>1</sup> Paul's Epistle to the Phillippians, chapter 4, verse 8.

practice petty intrigues, or defile his hands with the jobbing of sordid politicians. Forgetful of self, scorning duplicity, cunning, and craft of every description, he has remained true to himself, and to all who have confided their interests to his care. He has sought the welfare of the people and the glory of the state. In all his official and public, as well as private, transactions, he has abhorred deceit. Lying is his detestation; schemers and tricksters are the objects of his implacable disgust. The conduct of men to whom the boundary between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, is so narrow as almost to be invisible, and with whom prosperous wickedness is virtue, he denounces in withering terms. The lawyer seeking, by technical tricks, and immoral means, to defend a crime; the judge on the bench controlled by personal prejudice, popular sentiment, or the main chance for election; the legislator taking a bribe; the candidate for office purchasing votes, and truckling to win popular favor; corrupt officials combining to cheat responsibility; the forger, the false pretender, the fraudulent man, and he who by silence, not less than by words, misleads his neighbor, are, alike to him, guilty of no venial transgressions. He has sacrificed place and power to principle and conscience, when, by a contrary course, he might have retained both. His private interests he has made subservient to the welfare of the nation and the state, even at the expense of loss to himself. When it lay in his hand to enhance the values of his realty, and become a millionaire;—when by a stroke of his pen he could have made his coffers overflow;—he preferred the honor that closed against him, forever, that splendid and tempting vision. When the popular prejudice and public will were intent to blast the reputation of the state, he sprang to the rescue, careless alike of praise or blame. When bereavement invaded his home, and death twice draped it in gloom, and sorrowing children and wife sat in tears, lamenting a loss no time could repair, he still remained absent from home, crushed by his grief;—a faithful soldier standing between the life of the state and the savage foe that assailed it. When, in spite of his splendid services, he was set aside by the party discipline of a new administration, and the “state machine” rolled like a Juggernaut over all who opposed its progress, he repelled the creed of politicians that “no man can serve his country with effect out of office,” and with the same high sense of the

duties of life, devoted his time and his labor to the good of the nation and state. He valued no position, and no success, only so far as it helped him win some triumph in the cause of humanity, justice, and truth. He was ever the advocate of progress and reform, the friend of education and of virtue, and his heartfelt sincerity in all that he did, or attempted to do, was his shield against the suspicion of tortuous methods, indirect aims, and selfish ends.

The strength of the popular confidence in General Sibley's integrity may be learned from this, that vast personal interests have been intrusted to his management, the only security being his simple promise, infallible as bonds indorsed by princes, or mortgages on values equal to the world. No blot of dishonor stains his escutcheon, nor taint of corruption has tarnished his name. In the words of another, long intimate with his career, "his record is as stainless as the snow."

Such high moralities, in a public man, deserve special commendation, shining, as they do, all the more brilliantly, in an age proverbial for contrary developments, and when, too frequently, business and political transactions have acquired for themselves a character of thievery, oppression, sharp practice, robbery, and fraud. "A good name is better than ointment," and he, who transmits such a boon as this to his children and his country, has not lived in vain, but merits the esteem of the state and the praise of mankind. The ancient educators all directed the eyes of the youth of the state to the men who excelled in virtue. Nor will it injure Minnesotians to study the moral element which has given such permanence and value to the example of the Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley. "*Moribus inculpatus!*" One of the first institutions of the East has given diplomatic attestation to this high excellence in the character of him whose name it has honored.

As to the *religious element* in General Sibley's character, we have spoken elsewhere. His creed, the formal profession of his faith, his ecclesiastical relations shaped by the necessities of his pioneer life, his formation, with nineteen others, of the first Protestant church in the region afterward known as Minnesota Territory, his erection of a church building at his own expense, his unabated assistance to other churches, his support of the early missionaries of the territory, and his final identification of himself with the Episcopal Church in

St. Paul, the denomination to which his parents belonged, and in which his youth was nurtured. We have seen his observance of the Sabbath, both during his Indian life, and throughout his military campaigns, the deep communings of his heart with God when under the strokes of successive and crushing bereavements, and the acknowledgments in his military messages, as everywhere else, and, touchingly, in his private letters to his wife, of the special providence of God.

As a layman, he is wonderfully versed in the Scriptures, and can readily complete almost any passage anyone in conversation will commence. In scores, it may be said hundreds, of conversations with the writer of these lines, the writer has many times been indebted to the better memory of General Sibley for more accurate quotation of the Scriptures than himself had given, and many times, after reading a chapter in the New Testament, or a psalm in the Old, or some portion of the Historical Books, wonder has been excited at the depth and breadth of his discernment in the teachings of the Sacred Oracles. A constant reader of his Bible, and not neglectful of his devotions, he still continues his study of the Word of God, not as a literary occupation, or diversion, but with a practical and personal intent. If advancing years, and the week's weariness, abate his church attendance, it is not to engage in secular pursuits upon the Sabbath, but to win the rest his failing strength demands, and improve the hours, at home, in profitable meditation, and in the enjoyment of his family around him. Conspicuity in church affairs he has never sought. For years his activities as a vestryman in St. Paul's have been chiefly nominal, while yet supporting with his means, and taking interest in the welfare of the church, contributing to its charities, and needs, as generously as in his earlier years. A firm believer in the doctrines of Christianity, he is no less a firm believer in the fruit such doctrines should bear, and regards the outward profession of faith in the same as of infinitely less moment than a life conformable to the precepts of Christianity by which those doctrines are enforced. His abhorrence is the spectacle of men high in an outward profession of religion, and conspicuous in church relations, deporting themselves in secular and business affairs as if Christianity were only a name, devoid of power to induce a life of justice, honesty, and truth, equal to that of men who make no profession, or to that of a respectable religious



pagan. The practical side of Christianity, the example of him who went about doing good, outweighs with him all other considerations.

The natural shrinking and modesty which have characterized his whole life, and only have been overcome when public affairs, and a crisis, demanded that these should be sacrificed to the public good, makes him reserved in his expression of his religious feeling and his thoughts, to any save a few who enjoy his most sacred confidence, and to whom, at times, he reveals his silent experience. Ostentation and parade of what he deems the most sacred of all relations between man and his Maker, he repels, while yet to no subject does he lend a more deep and interested attention, and in none displays a more serious interest than in what pertains to a life after the present short time has run its course. With becoming solicitude he recalls the companions of his early days, many of whom are now gone, and the remainder of whom must soon go, and, with himself, enter on scenes untried and of momentous import.

For the severer and sterner forms of orthodox doctrine he entertains a qualified regard, while yet free to confess that these truths so long the heirloom of the largest portion of the evangelical church are to be judged of as little by their caricature in the hands of their enemies, as by the exaggerated expressions of their friends. For forms of government he has but little preference. His creed allows him to fellowship in spirit all true Christians to whatever denomination belonging. The Catholic, the Jew, the Presbyterian, and Episcopalian, the Methodist and Baptist, the Lutheran and the Congregationalist, he treats with a Christian and benevolent regard, while emphasizing the couplet of the poet:

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,  
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right." ●

He finds pleasure and profit in reading the addresses of a godly Catholic archbishop, or an Episcopalian rector or bishop, and takes the liveliest interest in the productions of a Talmage and a Spurgeon. He is neither an optimist nor a pessimist in his view of the future. While believing in the ultimate triumph of Christianity, he is satisfied, not only from the Scriptures, but from the lessons of past history, and the tendency of present times, that this victory can only be achieved after a fearful and impending struggle in which all



the forces of a living Christianity, found in all denominations, will be called into requisition to face, and perhaps with adverse fortune for a time, the whole combined force of anti-Christianity in one final conflict. The restlessness and lawlessness, seen everywhere in Christendom, the corruption in the bosom of the Church itself, the increasing unbelief of Christendom notwithstanding the amount of good in it, and the extension of missions, and the horoscope of the political constellation, and the relation of the European powers to the progress of civilization, and the complications of church and state, and struggle for power in the East, all seem, to his experience, after sixty years of observation, to forbode this result. As to the final outcome, in history, for the race of men in their conflict with evil, while fully accepting the statements of divine revelation, he yet believes that, somehow, the dark mystery of evil will yet be cleared up to the complete satisfaction of the whole intelligent universe, and the ways of God be vindicated to the world. Verging to the narrow house and long sleep appointed for all living, he deems life, without a firm hope in the mercy of God, to be but

"A painful passage o'er a restless flood,  
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good."

Unnumbered times, we have heard the words upon his tongue, "*Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man!*"

The *literary merit* of General Sibley's productions must not be passed by in silence. He was, as already intimated, a prolific writer for many of the papers and magazines of the East, as more recently for some in the West. By the literary as well as historical value of his productions, he contributed greatly to awaken the interest of the whole country in a region to which the people of the United States were comparatively strangers. Under his proper name, as also under the *noms de plume* of "Hal a Dakotah," "Walker-in-the-Pines," and other titles, in *Porter's Spirit of the Times*, *Forest and Stream*, *Rod and Gun*, *The Turf*, *the Field and the Farm*, *the Wildwoods*, *the Western Magazine*, and the valuable "Minnesota State Historical Society Collections," besides his various essays and lectures before different institutions and organizations, he has furnished, in his measure, a literature of great importance, in many respects, to the history of the Territory and State of Minnesota, as well as to that of the Northwest. In the classic English work

of "Hawker on Shooting," the two chapters, contributed by Mr. Sibley, stand inferior to nothing written by any of the accomplished pens brought to enrich the contents of that fascinating volume. His celebrated letter to Senator Foote, at the commencement of his congressional career, and published in the Southern and Eastern papers, unveiling the grandeur and resources of Minnesota, deemed, at that time, fit only to be the abode of savages and lumbermen, attracted universal attention, and assisted vastly to promote immigration to the Northwest. As "Walker-in-the-Pines," he contributed to the *St. Paul Pioneer*, in a series of extended chapters, the story of "Jack Frazer," a half-breed, and noble character, thirty-five of whose years had been spent with the Red Wing band of Dakotas. It is a valuable production, embodying authoritative statements, and a clear account of the manners, religious opinions, ceremonies, and other usages and customs, of the Dakotas, as taken from the lips of "Jack" himself, and as connected with a condition of aboriginal life such as existed two generations ago, in the region of country now known as Minnesota. The supplementary chapter, by General Sibley, upon "The Religion of the Dakotas" is a critique not only of "Jack's" information, but also of the labors of others in reference to the same subject, and, though brief, is of great value to the ethnologist and antiquarian. In all these productions, General Sibley shows himself to be a master of the pen, gifted with a power of arrangement, expression, and description, not surpassed by anything in Fielding and Smollet, Alison or Prescott, Goldsmith or Scott. If the test of perfection in composition is the impossibility of reconstructing the sentence, or clause, in a better form, or in language more apt, graceful, and chaste,—if, by any effort to give it a new shape, the work is marred, and the charm lost,—the application of this rule to the productions of General Sibley will rank him, not only as one of the best writers in the State of Minnesota, but anywhere else. The styles of men are, indeed, diverse, because the men themselves are so, just as the stars and the flowers are different, and the tones of musical instruments various. The Vicar of Wakefield does not read like *Ivanhoe*, nor the *Divina Commedia* like *Childe Harold*. The stately majesty of Gibbon is not the racy brilliance of Macaulay, and Shakespeare's *Othello* and Milton's *Comus* were not born of the same mother. Yet all are models

of literary excellence. In like manner, the pen of "Hal a Dakotah," "Walker-in-the-Pines," or "Sibley," is not that of another, but is all his own, and such as only himself can wield.

As a specimen of *descriptive power* in simple narration, and chasteness of style, what can be more perfect than this, written more than twenty years ago, when, having vented his wrath against those whose wanton slaughter of birds and animals, not in the season for game, was inspired alone by the "love of killing for the sake of killing," he turns to picture the magical change a few years were sufficient to bring to a region infested by savage hordes, and whose mountains and plains were a common hunting ground for the trader and Indian:

"The onward march of civilization, and heavy and ceaseless tramp of thousands, and tens of thousands, of white men seeking their homes in the far West, results in forcing the larger animals, such as the buffalo, elk, and deer, farther and farther away toward the Stony Mountains, there to be met and exterminated by the pale faces from the Pacific. In our happy and beautiful territory, where we have no Bloody Kansas scenes to deplore, the buffalo, elk, and deer, indeed, yet roam, but they are daily retiring before the avalanche of white settlers who are precipitating themselves upon us. It is probable that most of your readers have had but a faint perception of the process by which the mighty Northwest is transformed from a wilderness into a populous state, in an incredibly short space of time. Let them picture to themselves a magnificent prairie, studded with fine lakes and interspersed with luxuriant groves of oak and other timber, with a camp in the distance, composed of conical lodges of skin, and a troop of daring Dakota horsemen, accompanied by a single white man (your friend Hal), urging the chase of a herd of buffalo. Let them regard that as a true scene of 1850, or even later, then bid them recall the same landscape in 1856, and from the picture will have vanished Indian men, women, and children, buffalo, dogs, and lodges, leaving the solitary white man to gaze with amazement, not untinged with melancholy, upon thriving villages, countless farms, teeming with laborers engaged in securing the abundant harvest, and all the other evidences of happiness and comfort which characterize the settlements of young America. Let them conceive the whole vast area of 160,000 square miles, a very small part of which they have looked upon, as containing 6,000 whites, all told, in 1850, and of that same area six years later with a population of 200,000, of the prime men, women, and children of the whole land, and they will be able to realize, to some extent, how Minnesota has been changed, as by the wand of a magician, and how it is that the infant communities of the 'Great West' spring into full strength and manhood almost as instantaneously as armed Minerva from the head of Jove.

"To an old hunter like myself, accustomed to the solitude of forest and prairie, these changes are, as I have before hinted, not unattended with the lingering regret which we feel when some fair but wild vision disappears suddenly from our enraptured view. The Indians with whom I lived and hunted for so many years—where are they? The powerful and haughty tribe of Dakotas, who possessed the fair land, and boasted that they were, and would ever remain, its only masters—what is their fate? Turn to the history of the Six Nations, and of other bands, whose graves are numberless on both sides of the Alleghanies, and you will need but little aid from the imagination to enable you to reply correctly to such interrogatories. Broken treaties and unperformed promises on the part of the government, and the presence of a power which the Indians feel their inability to resist, these are but a repetition of the old story, and the humbled and degraded Dakotas can look for no redress of their grievances, this side of the 'Spirit Land.' Their country has passed into the possession of a race who can appreciate its beauties and develop its riches, and my only regret is that the government and its agents have failed to use the opportunities presented to them, to place the poor Indians in a position to be treated kindly and fairly, and to be protected in the possession of the rights secured to them by solemn treaty.

"But I will no longer pursue a strain so lugubrious. Let us leave the settlement of these questions in the hand of the Great Father of all."<sup>1</sup>

Another and still more recent specimen of this kind of writing is the following sketch of the early times, not less valuable for its information and its picture of what Minnesota was in her pristine condition, than as a model of elegant and chaste composition:

"Our state has sprung into existence so recently that some of us yet living have participated in or witnessed each step of her progress from pre-territorial times, when a few hundreds of men employed in the fur trade were all the whites to be found in the country, to the present period, when Minnesota possesses a population nearly equal to one-sixth of that composing the entire American confederation when it was finally emancipated from foreign control. Less than a generation since, what is now called Minnesota, together with a large part of co-terminus territory, was of importance only as a region producing in abundance wild animals valuable for their furs and skins. The bear, the deer, the fisher, the marten, and the raccoon, were the tenants of the woods; the beaver, the otter, and other amphibia, such as the mink and the muskrat, were to be found in the streams and lakes, while the prairies were dotted with countless herds of the bison and the elk, accompanied by their usual attendants, wolves and foxes, which scarcely deigned to seek concealment from the eye of the traveler. The numerous lakes and marshes were the breeding places of myriads of wild fowl, including swan, geese, and ducks. Many of the younger men who sought employment with the fur companies were, like myself, more attracted to this wild region by a love of adventure and of the chase, than by any prospect of pecuniary gain.

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<sup>1</sup> The Forest and Stream.

There was always enough of danger, also, to give zest to extreme frontier life, and to counteract any tendency to *ennui*. There were the perils of prairie fires and of flood, from evil-disposed savages, and those inseparable from the hunt of ferocious wild beasts, such as the bear, the panther, and the buffalo. War was the normal condition of the powerful bands of Dakotas and Chippewas, and the white man, falling in with a war party of these belligerent tribes, might deem himself fortunate if he could save his life by a sacrifice of whatever property he possessed. The traveler and the hunter in their peregrinations were compelled to trust to their skill in constructing rafts or in swimming, for crossing the numerous streams, and to the compass, or to the sun and stars, to direct their course. Nature in her primitive luxuriance, unmarred by the labor of man, unveiled her beauties on every side, as a reward to those of her infrequent visitors who could appreciate and enjoy them."<sup>1</sup>

As an example of *epistolary correspondence*, his letter, in the name of the Minnesota Historical Society, addressed to the honorable the council of the city of Bergamo, Italy, in response to a communication from the same, accompanied by the presentation to the Historical Society of the writings of Beltrami, has been everywhere referred to as a model of dignified, chaste, and elegant acknowledgment. The full text of the composition is the following:

ROOMS OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, March 6, 1867.

*To the Honorable G. B. Camozzi Vertova, Mayor, and the Honorable Aldermen of the City of Bergamo, Italy,*

GENTLEMEN: By direction of the executive council of the Minnesota Historical Society, I have the honor to acknowledge, on their behalf, the receipt from the city of Bergamo, so worthily represented by you, of a handsomely bound volume entitled "*Costantine Beltrami da Bergamo — Notizie e lettere pubblicate per cura del municipio di Bergamo e dedicate alla societa storica di Minnesota*," prefaced by an eloquent and pathetic letter addressed by you as representatives of the native city of Beltrami, to this society, bearing date the first of January, 1865, and containing the following productions, to-wit:

*First*—The articles of Gabrielle Rosa, collected under the title of "*Travels and Discoveries of Costantine Beltrami*."

*Second*—"Dissertation on the Travels and Writings of Costantine Beltrami," by Count Pietro Moroni.

*Third*—Letters of Chateaubriand, La Fayette, Lafitte, Julien, Rossignac, Davis, Robertson, and Camonge, to Costantine Beltrami.

*Fourth*—Letter from Costantine Beltrami to Mons. Monglave, perpetual secretary of the Historical Institute of France.

In addition to this were twenty-five extra copies of the same work, and a large and elegant copy of Professor Scuri's painting of Beltrami.

<sup>1</sup> Coll. Minn. Hist. Soc., Vol. III, Part 2, pp. 194 and 195.

For all these kind offerings, the executive council have requested me, on the part of the society, to tender to you individually and collectively the expression of their earnest gratitude and thanks, and they respectfully desire you to convey to your fellow citizens of Bergamo, their keen appreciation of the cordial and friendly feeling manifested by them, as set forth in the communication which bears your own signatures. The society fully reciprocates the wish expressed in the concluding portion of that document, that the courtesies extended may "add a new and strong link to bind together the great and free people of the American Union and the Italian people."

The object of the Minnesota Historical Society, as you have been heretofore apprised, is the collection of all the materials within its reach, relating to the lives and adventures of those early explorers whose names are indissolubly linked with the region now embraced within the limits of this vast state, and to incorporate in its annals whatever may tend to throw light upon the prehistoric period of Minnesota; the habits and customs of the aboriginal occupants of the country, and, in short, everything which may be considered essential to the elucidation of facts, for the guidance of the future historian.

Into this great reservoir you have cast your contributions, which are not only valuable for their originality, and the artistic beauty with which they have been reproduced, but especially for the aid rendered by them to this society, in rescuing from undeserved obscurity and forgetfulness, the name of the daring and generous Italian, Costantine Beltrami.

Were it permitted to your illustrious countryman to burst the ligaments of the grave, and to revisit in life the scenes of his former wanderings in this far-off land, he would be the amazed and delighted spectator of the marvelous transformation which has been wrought in less than half a century. His eye would rest upon cities, towns, and villages situated on the very spots where he had accepted the hospitality of the savages in their rude wigwams; and the evidences of a young and vigorous civilization would meet his astonished vision on the broad prairie, which he had known only as the resort of countless herds of the bison and of the elk. The wilderness traversed by him in 1823, in which the face of a white man was seldom seen, now contains a population of 350,000 Americans, active, industrious, and enterprising.

Such, honorable sirs, are the wonderful changes which a few short years have made in this Northwestern state. Is it strange that we who live to profit by the toils and exposures of the noble men who first explored and brought into notice, this *terra incognita*, which is destined to become the home of millions of freemen, should seek with earnestness and zeal to redeem their names from oblivion, and to assign to each the honor due him as a pioneer in the great work?

In conclusion, the Minnesota Historical Society, through me, beg leave to offer to your acceptance the following documents:

*First*—Copies of their "Collections for 1867," containing a memoir of Costantine Beltrami.

*Second*—An engrossed copy of the bill which passed the legislature of Minnesota, and was approved by the governor, to establish the county of Beltrami.



*Third* — Certified copies of the proceedings of the legislature of Minnesota, and of the executive council of this society on the same subject.

*Fourth* — A photograph of Major Taliaferro, together with an explanatory letter from him to Signor Rosa.

All of which will be transmitted with this letter to your address, through the medium of the United States State Department in Washington City. I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

(Henry)

H. H. SIBLEY,

*President Minnesota Historical Society.*<sup>1</sup>

The *poetical propensities* of General Sibley, though less frequently indulged, and less severely cultivated, than other impulses with which his nature was endowed, yet found their special opportunities. During the civil strife between North and South, not only the line between pulpit and platform was obliterated, but, too often, the minister devoted the Sabbath hours for divine worship, and sacred instruction, to the discussion of questions concerning national government, partisan politics, construction and interpretation of the Constitution, foreign affairs, and the "things that are Cæsar's" in general. The survivors of that epoch still remember, how, for years previous to the firing of the first gun on Fort Sumter, and thenceforward, for years after, the pulpit, not less in Boston, New York, and Brooklyn, than in Charleston, Richmond, and New Orleans, in fact, in all cities, both North and South, lent its whole influence to inflame the discontent of the two great sections of the country, and intensify the hate that already foretokened the bloodiest and most unnatural conflict known to any century. There are times, indeed, when moral questions enter the sphere of political action, and a voice from the pulpit is no less imperative in behalf of honesty, integrity, justice, and truth, in social and civil life, than is a voice from the platform, or from state legislatures, judicial benches, and

<sup>1</sup> *Giacomo Costantine Beltrami*, born in Bergamo, Italy, 1779, was an eminent Italian patriot, who, belonging to the order of the *Carbonari*, during the civil commotions in 1820, was exiled from his country, and, having traveled in Germany, France, and England, came to the United States in 1823. Accompanied by Major Taliaferro, he reached St. Anthony Falls, and Fort Snelling, May 20, 1823, and subsequently explored certain regions of the Northwest Territory. He was, while in Italy, chancellor of the departments of Stura and the Tanaro, judge of the court at Udine, and of the civil and criminal court at Macerata. The legislature of Minnesota honored him by establishing a county, in the state, called by his name. The volume referred to in the letter of General Sibley, is dedicated "*Alla Società Storica di Minnesota*," contains a beautiful engraving of Beltrami pushing his canoe up the Mississippi, and bears the official seal and autographs of the municipal officers of Bergamo. A brief monograph of Beltrami is found in the Minnesota Historical Society Collections, Vol. III., Part 3, Second Edition, 1889, pp. 88-196.



national councils. But, this conceded, nothing can justify, or excuse, the transubstantiation of the pulpit into a political tribune, or the church into an arena of secular strife. At such times, men whose early memories of what religion seemed to them, in its heaven-born spirit, as a religion of peace and good will, their sense of religious propriety being strong besides, are apt to express themselves in a manner proportioned to the strength of their judgments, and, not unfrequently, the Muse is invited to lend her numbers to enforce their emotions.

A sentiment of this kind bubbled up, one day, in the breast of General Sibley, after a painful disappointment experienced during Sabbath services, from which he had hoped to gain some spiritual good. Judged by the rules of art, the poem will not rank with the best effusions of the Muse, while yet its character and grade are far above the mediocre products of the man who thinks that "jingling rhymes" are poetry. There is not only a quiet depth and steady flow of moral feeling in it, but it paints, in simple words, two pictures,— "*Then and Now*,"—which, if portrayed upon the painter's canvas, would excite admiration of their truth, and thanks for their appropriateness, not only to the times in which they were written, but, in many respects, to our own day.

#### THEN AND NOW.

##### THEN.

Upon a mount begirt with green, a massive building stands,  
To honor him whose dwelling 's in "a house not made with hands;"  
Around its ancient walls—untrimmed the grand old oaks arise,  
And spread their branches far and wide toward distant skies.  
It was a Sabbath morn, the sun was shining bright,  
Athwart the grave stones, thickly strown, it shed its peerless light;  
As here the dead, both old and young, of generations past,  
'Mid tears of mourning friends, had found a home at last.  
The church within was neat and trim, with seats of homely mould,  
And the worn pulpit show'd no trace of crimson or of gold.  
Devout, the preacher lifts his hands up to the throne of grace,  
And prays for blessings on the heads of all the human race.  
A man of God, who long, like Enoch, walked in pious ways,  
And sought no worthless land of men, but labor'd for his praise.  
The earnest crowd, compos'd of all who liv'd in peace around,  
Each worldly thought had banish'd far, from off that sacred ground.  
The prayers are made, the hymns are sung, and then the holy priest,  
With mind intent, asks heavn'ly aid to spread the gospel feast;

The pages of the good old book turns o'er with reverential awe,  
 And to his list'ning people speaks, of God's most holy law.  
 He points them to the cross of Christ, whence hope alone can flow  
 To all who, curs'd by sin, are doom'd to grovel here below.  
 He pleads with youth and age, while tears stream down his furrow'd  
 cheek,

That they would turn from worldly ways, their Saviour kind to seek.  
 He warns them of the wrath to come, but most he cares to dwell,  
 On Jesus' boundless love, who came, to save their souls from hell;  
 And when he closed, and, to their homes, dismiss'd his humble flock,  
 Among them none were found to scorn, or make of truth a mock.  
 The teachings of that meek old man sank deep in ev'ry breast,  
 And gave to each a foretaste of the promis'd heavenly rest.

## NOW.

I saw within the city dense, full many a glittering spire,  
 That shone with light reflected oft, like points of living fire,  
 Denoting where the great array of Christian people meet,  
 To worship God, and doctrine learn at some Gamaliel's feet.  
 'Tis Sabbath day, we'll enter in, with reverence appear,  
 And join the throng of worshipers, to offer praise sincere.  
 The sexton, with an easy grace, points out a distant pew,  
 And intimates, with shake of head, 'twill do for me and you.  
 No owner of the cushioned seats invites us to partake  
 Of the luxurious lounge on which he prays "for Jesus' sake."  
 The broadcloth coat and silken dress alone an entrance claim,  
 To where the pious gentry sit, great man and smirking dame.  
 The roof is arch'd, the pillars grand, all perfect and complete,  
 Except that strangers, poorly clad, must take an oaken seat.  
 The aisles are all well carpeted, the pulpit cover'd o'er  
 With crimson velvet, rich and rare, all hanging down before.  
 Upon a fine projection, hemm'd with something like point lace,  
 The Book of Truth, in handsome guise, rests in its proper place.  
 And now the organ's swelling notes attention call to him  
 Who occupies the sacred desk,—in form both tall and slim,  
 His features solemnly drawn down, his coat and neck-cloth white,  
 Are each of faultless cut and fit, his eyes are keen and bright.  
 He gives the psalm, which duly sung, by the small chosen choir  
 Of tooting juveniles, the rest all listening to admire.  
 "Behold he prayeth," but his prayers are not like those of old.  
 Instead of bowing in the dust, he's confident and bold.  
 He tells the Majesty of Heaven what straightway should be done,  
 To put the moral world in shape that it may smoothly run.  
 He asks that all may think like him, for he is surely right,  
 In politics, religion, and all topics black and white.  
 The spirit of the Publican, who smites his breast, and cries  
 For mercy undeserv'd by him, dulls not our preacher's eyes,  
 More like the stately Pharisee, who renders thanks to Heav'n,  
 That he is not like other men, swell'd up with sinful leav'n.

The sermon next in course comes off, and here the parson shines,  
 Although he slight attention pays to the celestial lines,  
 Which warn him often not to judge his fellow man with hate,  
 Lest he himself be judg'd by One who holds the scales of fate.  
 He coldly prates of what all owe, to God and man, of love,  
 And more dilutes his weak discourse, upon the world above,  
 With mundane questions, politics, and Radical Tom Jones,  
 Than points the thirsty soul to Heav'n in earnest tones.  
 O vile deceit! pretenses false! is *this* religion pure,  
 Such as the Saviour taught on earth, the soul's disease to cure?  
 What wonder that the land is full of unbelief and crime,  
 When parsons leave their mission high, eternity, for time,  
 And pander to the vicious taste, for tinsel glare and show,  
 Forgetting that the Lord of life, from Heav'n came here below,  
 To save from death the souls of men, and not to regulate  
 The small affairs of civil life, or government of state.  
 The congregation unrebuk'd, pleased with themselves and him,  
 Soon homeward wend their gleesome way, dismissed by Reverend Prim.  
 The men to talk of Jones, the dames, of flummery, Prim, and dress,  
 With no thought of the future life to trouble or oppress.  
 The preacher, elegant, has made his bow,  
 I follow suit, and sorrow most that THEN's not NOW.

There is one other department of writing in which General Sibley excels, and a specimen of which it is but justice to his pen to reproduce. It combines a deep tenderness of heart, with his accustomed propriety of expression, and is a credit to the sympathizing character of his manhood, as it is proof of the constancy of a personal affection, which death itself could not quench. It is an *elegaic tribute* to the departed friend of his youth, and companion of his riper years. It has the low sound of the sighing wind in the cypress tree. At the close of one of his contributions to the Minnesota Historical Society, in the year 1874, he commemorates the virtues of his deceased comrade Colonel Hercules L. Dousman, in the following style:

"I cannot but recall to mind, with the keenest regret, that the friend of my early and riper years,—my associate in business for nearly a quarter of a century,—who directed my steps for the first time to what is now Minnesota, and to whom I was fervently attached, has gone the way of all the earth. He was summoned away suddenly, when his bodily vigor seemed hardly to have been diminished, or his intellectual energies to have lost any portion of their force. He left behind him no enemies to exult over his departure, but very many warm friends and dear relatives to lament the death of one whose place can never be filled in their affections. All that was mortal of the imposing form and presence of the deceased, now lies mouldering in the cemetery he himself had donated to the Catholic Church

at Prairie du Chien, and the magnificent marble monument erected by loving hands to commemorate his virtues will have become dim and tarnished by time, long ere his noble example shall cease to exercise an influence upon the community and the state of which he was an honored member."

"Why weep ye, then, for him, who having run  
The bound of man's appointed years, at last,  
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labors done,  
Serenely to his final rest has passed:  
While the soft memory of his virtues yet  
Lingers, like twilight hues when the bright sun has set." <sup>1</sup>

Not less eloquently, simply, and tenderly, does he speak, on his feet, as he stands beside the coffin of the brave soldier he loves so well, the man whose virtues he delighted to extol, his life-long friend, Major Joseph R. Brown. Whether writing or speaking, the same gift and aptitude of expression, in thought and feeling, never desert him. Paying the last tribute of affection to the remains of his endeared companion, he says:

"My acquaintance with Major Brown dates back thirty-five years—more than the lifetime of a generation. During all of that long period a friendship existed between us which continued to the day of his death. When separated from each other, we corresponded more or less frequently, so that our interchanges of letters amounted to hundreds, if not to thousands. We were generally of like opinion on questions of public policy, and especially did we accord in the belief that justice to the oppressed and downtrodden Indian race demanded a total change of policy on the part of the government and its agents. He was the firm friend of the poor and suffering among whites and Indians, and by none will his sudden demise be more sincerely lamented than by those of that class who were accustomed to look to him for succor. Major Brown was remarkable for his courage as well as for his equanimity. I have seen him in the heat of battle, when bullets flew thick and fast around him, but his cheek blanched not, nor did he evince by outward appearance that he was at all disturbed by the fact he was liable at any moment to be struck down.

"But, my friends, this is neither the time nor the occasion to enter into details of the life and character of our deceased friend. That will be done by some competent hand hereafter, when the history of our political organization, as a territory and state, shall be written. No man stands forth more prominently as the untiring friend of Minnesota in all the phases of her existence than does Major Brown, and any history which does not mark him as among the first to labor efficiently for her advancement and general prosperity will be simply defective and incomplete.

"There remains to us only to perform the last office of the dead. To us among the old settlers the lesson taught us that soon we shall follow our friend to the other world, should operate as a warning to put our houses in order, and prepare for the momentous change. What can we offer but our

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<sup>1</sup> Coll. Minn. Hist. Soc. Vol. III., Part 2, pp. 199, 200.

warm and earnest sympathies to the sorrow-stricken family, in this their great bereavement? All that remains of the affectionate husband and the fond and indulgent father, cold and lifeless, is contained in the casket before us, which is about to be consigned to the earth. We can but point the surviving relatives to the consolation offered by the Christian faith, for all else, in such an hour as this, is vanity and vexation of spirit.

"And now, my old and tried friend, I leave you to your long and lonely sleep. Peace to your ashes. 'Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.'"

If the source of writing well is, as Horace says, "to be wise,"—"scribendi recte sapere est fons et principium,"—portraying truth in feeling, thought, and character, expressing what is ordinary in forms of ordinary speech, what is beautiful in forms of beauty, what is grand, grandly, and the tender in terms of tenderness, intolerant of sloven carelessness, everything conformed to nature as the highest art, none will dispute that General Sibley has a claim to a place among the models of fine composition. Whatever the form of his production, it is pervaded always by unity of sentiment and clear design, and moves with simplicity and ease straight to its end.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The following partial list of published writings of General Sibley is found, chiefly in the catalogue of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. II., pp. 467, 468:

- 1 Description of Minnesota, 1850.—Minnesota Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. I., p. 37.
- 2 History of the Minnesota State Railroad Bonds, "Five Million Loan."—Address, H. R., Feb. 8, 1871.
- 3 Hunting on the Western Prairies.—Hawker's Instructions to Young Sportsmen, 1853.
- 4 Inaugural Address as Governor of Minnesota, 1858.
- 5 Report to Adjutant General O. Malmros, Battle of Birch Coolie, 1862.
- 6 Report, Battle of Wood Lake, 1862.
- 7 Memoir of Hercules L. Dousman.—Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. III., p. 192.
- 8 Memoir of Jean Nicolle.—Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. I., p. 163.
- 9 Message from Governor Sibley, Minnesota, 1859.
- 10 Reminiscences, Personal and Historical.—Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. I., p. 457.
- 11 Address before Minn. Hist. Soc., 1856.
- 12 Reminiscences of Early Days of Minnesota.—Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. III., p. 242.
- 13 Sketch of John Osher-Day.—Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. III., p. 99.
- 14 Speech before Committee on Elections, U. S. H. R.—Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. I., p. 63.
- 15 Speech on the Territories and our Indian Relations, U. S. H. R., 1850, Washington.
- 16 History of Jack Frazer.—Pioneer, 1866.
- 17 Religion of the Dakotas.—Pioneer, 1866.
- 18 Address, Thirteenth Anniversary of the Minnesota State Historical Society, 1879.
- 19 Address before the Young Men's Christian Association.
- 20 Address at the Inaugural of Governor Hubbard.
- 21 Address at the Semi-Centennial Banquet, Advent of H. H. Sibley to Mendota.
- 22 Address at the Quarto-Centennial Celebration of the Battle of Birch Coolie.
- 23 First Address of Hon. H. H. Sibley to his Constituents.
- 24 Second Address of Hon. H. H. Sibley to his Constituents.
- 25 Eulogy on General Ulysses S. Grant.

The various speeches of Hon. H. H. Sibley while in Congress are found in the volumes of the Congressional Globe, during the years 1843-1852.

A love of the *romantic and beautiful in Nature* is one of the prominent characteristics of General Sibley's mind. The æsthetic feeling asserts itself everywhere, and is found ever blending itself with the noblest sentiments of morality and religion. The student of ethics and æsthetics will easily comprehend this fact, aware how the phenomena of both are mutually related, the intellectual act accompanied by the moral feeling in the one case being the analogue of the intellectual act accompanied by the æsthetic feeling in the other. Both coexist in all noble minds, and resolve themselves into a higher unity in consciousness; just as in the sublime trilogy of Plato, "*the good, the beautiful, and true,*" are conceived of as but different forms of the one Supreme Excellence—revealing itself in the human spirit, in Nature, and in revelation, alike, and whose eternal fountain is the Absolute Being, the source of all existence, motion, and life, whether of matter or mind. It was the inborn love of Nature, and of a life of adventure in Nature's wild and untrodden retreats, that first constrained young Sibley to forsake his paternal home. It was his friend Dousman's glowing account of the scenery and sports of the far Northwest, that tempted his feet to wend their way to Mendota, and make his home where the waters meet. Already, in his own description of the scene when his eyes first rested on Fort Snelling and the mingling of the Mississippi and Minnesota, and the sunshine dancing on the panorama, we see the expression of his love of the beautiful. It was the same sentiment that asserted its supremacy as, unconscious of what it might bring, he stood, a groomsman, attracted by one who afterward bore his name, and has ever maintained its rights in admiration of womanly beauty and grace. It mingles itself everywhere with his inmost life and thought, and streams from the end of his pen in lines of exquisite style and taste. Nature, to him, was more than a painted scene, void of all soul and life; more than a poem written by art, whose author had long since perished. She was no less than a living being, a breathing, whispering, teacher of all things good, a source of the noblest and loftiest truths. What can be more beautiful than the following description of the romantic region he loved so well, and which he records in one of his papers to the State Historical Society, as one of the motives for state pride?

"It has been my fortune to visit, at one time or another, almost every part of our widely extended state. The area now comprised in the south-

ern counties was my hunting ground, year after year. I have ascended the Minnesota valley to its termination, and have roamed along the shores of the magnificent lakes of the Kandiyohi region, and those northwest toward the Red river. I have traversed the prairies between Fort Ridgley and Mankato south to the boundary of Iowa, and I have stood by the far-off iron monuments which mark the line between Minnesota and the Territory of Dakota, and yet to this moment I am unable to decide which section is the most beautiful and attractive. Like the individual who finds himself surrounded by a bevy of fair maidens, equal in charms but of different styles of loveliness, and adjudges the palm to the one he looks upon, until his eye rests upon another to be dazzled in turn by her attractions, so I, after gazing at the scenery in various parts of the state successively, have asked myself each time the question, 'Where can a more inviting region be found upon the earth?' Each landscape has seemed to be unapproachable in its perfection and the symmetry of its proportions, until another, its peer in all respects, has extorted the same measure of unqualified admiration."

Or what more beautiful than his description of the scene when, arrayed as a hunter and chasing the elk, the charm of Nature so touched his sensitive mind, as to cause him, in after years, to paint the same on his glowing page?

"The prairie, clothed in its variegated autumn hues, appeared to rise and fall like the undulations of the ocean, and in all directions might be perceived points of woodland growth giving forth all the tints peculiar to an American forest. A thin belt of trees encircled a lake not distant, the bright sheet of water, unruffled by a breeze, gleaming through the openings in all its glorious beauty. It seemed almost a sacrilege to Nature to invade her solitudes, only to carry with us dismay and death."

Or, again, what more true than the sentiment expressed when speaking of the early pioneers of Minnesota, he says,

"Men who like Cooper's Leatherstocking are brought face to face with Nature in her deepest solitudes, are led naturally to the worship of that Great Being whose hand alone could have created the vast expanse of wood and prairie, mountain, lake, and river which spread themselves daily in endless extent and variety before their eyes."

Or, once more, what more impressive than his words when recognizing the Providence that saved his life, not merely once, but many times, amid the strange adventures of his perilous career, he said, on one occasion of deliverance,

"The frequenter of Nature's vast solitudes may be a wild and reckless man, but he cannot be essentially an irreligious man. The solemn silence of the forest and the prairie, the unseen dangers incident to this mode of life, and the consciousness that the providence of God can alone avert them, all these have the effect to lead even thoughtless men to serious and deep reflection."



Wherever he roamed, no matter how rough his way, or distant soever his footsteps bore him from scenes of civilization, the established forms and customs of society, the advantages the life of crowded cities, and the opportunities of public intercourse, might bring, still the vision that rose before him as he traversed the "open prairie," and the "vast solitudes of Nature"—her "woods and wilds"—was an enchanting one, full of the grandest instruction. He became an interpreter of Nature, and a worshiper as well. He could testify, in spite of the "struggle to survive," that

"The youth who daily farther from the East  
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,  
And, by the vision splendid,  
Is on his way attended."

No matter how deaf the region to all the voices of a teeming population, or mute of culture or of learning, he still found—to use his own words—a "*companionship of Nature*" which became a source of revelation and a spring of meditation such as the early sages found, and, taught as they were taught,—apart from books and tomes,—learned some of the noblest, deepest, and sublimest truths, concerning God, man, the universe, and their relations. What, in his classic education, he had already read of the ancient systems of faith, and mythologies in connection with sylph and nymph, fauna and flora, and forest bowers, and the thoughts of men who, smitten with the love of Nature, indulged their contemplation, only intensified his desire, and added a mystic sense to every scene around him. The words of Whittier, he understood, when the poet said:

"I listen to the Sibyl's chant,  
The voice of priest, hierophant,  
I know what Indian Krishna saith,  
And what of life and what of death  
The *Daimon* taught to Socrates,  
And what, beneath his garden trees,  
Slow pacing, with a dream-like tread,  
The solemn-thoughted Plato said."

His admiration of Wordsworth's lines, in "Tintern Abbey," and which he deemed even grander than Byron's celebrated apostrophe to the ocean, or his oft-quoted "pleasure in the pathless woods," and "rapture on the lonely shore," and "society where none intrudes," more fittingly than any other express precisely what, many times, he has declared to have been his own experience, in his communion with Nature:

" I have *heard*  
 The still sad music of humanity,  
 Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
 To chasten and subdue, And I have *felt*  
*A Presence* that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean, and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
*A motion and a spirit that impels*  
*All thinking things, all objects of all thought,*  
*And rolls through all things.* Therefore am I still  
 A lover of meadows and of the woods  
 And mountains, and all that we behold,  
 From this green earth, of all the mighty world  
 Of eye, and ear, both what they half create  
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
 In Nature, and the language of the same,  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
 Of all my being."

But the serious and divine in nature were not the only things that engaged his attention, and the "sad music of humanity" and the great soul that "rolls through all things" were frequently exchanged for the enjoyment that comes to a keen sense of the comical and humorous. No man relished a "good joke," or a "serio-comic circumstance," more than did General Sibley in his early days,—a characteristic that still adheres to his later years. The voices of Nature are not always pensive, and her lessons are not always confined to religion. Even in her more rude and uninviting forms she oftentimes imparts instruction of the choicest and most serviceable quality, and impresses her lessons in the midst of scenes and circumstances the most amusing. General Sibley was not a stranger to this fact, and that the enjoyment derived therefrom is always in proportion to man's capacity to appreciate the situation. Among the many mirth-provoking things in his experience was that of his "ten-mile ride, bare-headed," over a stony way, exposed to the pitiless blasts of a Minnesota winter, as the "cold winds whistled through the trees," and its "icy fangs" made him feel what Shakespeare called "the season's difference,"—the thermometer standing twenty degrees below zero, the icicles depending from his nostrils and beard. To make a virtue of a necessity, and the

best of a bad situation, is always deemed an exploit of prudence. The comic feature of this event, however, was the cool, philosophic manner in which the victim of bareheadedness extracted comfort from the severity that wellnigh ended his career, calmly saying in sweet submission as the blasts blew on:

“This is no flattery ! These are counselors  
That feelingly persuade me what I am !  
Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a jewel in its head.  
And this, our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything !”

Not less comical and humorous, at the other end of the thermometer, is his account of the sad fate that befell poor Labathe one hot summer day, at a tea-party where “Indian etiquette” required no manners save the consumption of all that is set before anyone, and where an imperfect use of English, by a Canadian Frenchman, with unusual politeness on the part of the waiter and hostess, almost terminated Labathe’s mortal existence. General Sibley shall tell the story in his own inimitable style:

“Joseph Laframboise, who died several years since, was a capital mimic, spoke with fluency four or five different languages and he was withal an inveterate practical joker. He and Alex. Faribault were wont to amuse themselves at the expense of Labathe, who was a simple-minded, honest sort of a man, and by no means a match for his tormentors.

“A standing jest at his cost, was his experience at a tea-party at Fort Snelling. The trio mentioned was invited by Captain G. of the army to take tea and spend the evening at his quarters, and the invitation was accepted. It was in the month of July, and the weather intensely warm. The party in due time were seated around the table, and the cups and saucers were of the generous proportions ignored in these modern and more fashionable days. It should be premised that Indian etiquette demands on all festive occasions, that the visitor shall leave nothing unconsumed of the meat or drink placed before him. The large cup filled with tea was handed to Labathe and the contents disposed of. The poor fellow at that time could speak nothing more of English than the imperfect sentence ‘Tank you.’ When his cup was empty, Mrs. G., who was at the head of the table, said in her suave and gentle manner, ‘Mr. Labathe, please take some more tea.’ Labathe responded, ‘Tank you, madam,’ which being interpreted by the waiter to mean an assent, he took the cup and handed it to the hostess, and Mr. Labathe was forthwith freshly supplied with the hot liquid. Labathe managed to swallow it, sweltering meanwhile with the fervent heat of the evening, and again he was requested to permit his

cup to be replenished. 'Tank you, madam,' was the only reply the victim could give. Seven great vessels full of the boiling tea were thus successively poured down his throat, Laframboise and Faribault meantime almost choking with suppressed laughter. For the eighth time the waiter approached to seize the cup, when the aboriginal politeness which had enabled Labathe to bear up amid his sufferings gave way entirely, and rising from his seat, to the amazement of the company, he exclaimed frantically, '*Laframboise, pour l'amour de bon Dieu, pour quoi ne dites vous pas a madame, que je ne'n veut point davantage.*' ('Laframboise, for the love of God, why do you not tell madame that I do not wish for any more tea?') Labathe never heard the last of that scene while he lived."

It has ministered to the enjoyment of General Sibley, to tell, also, how the old Frenchman, Rocque, an Indian trader, who resided near Lake Pepin, and had learned, but imperfectly, to pronounce the English word roast-beef as "*ros-bif*,"—this being the extent of his English vocabulary,—was inconvenienced by his lack of more proficient learning:

"The old man Rocque, mentioned as residing near Lake Pepin, afforded another instance of the inconvenience of not being able to speak English. He knew one compound word only, and that was roast-beef, which he called '*ros-bif*.' He accompanied a Dakota delegation to Washington City on one occasion, and when asked at the public houses what he would be helped to, he could only say *ros-bif*! So that the unhappy old gentleman, although longing for a chance at the many good things he would have preferred, performed the round trip on '*ros-bif*.'"

Scores of such incidents in the Minnesota life of General Sibley could be narrated, and other circumstances full of amusement, but these are sufficient to show his love of the comic, the serio-comic, and the humorous. It is a fact, in mental development, that men who are the most susceptible to deep moral and religious impressions, and to the finest and noblest emotions, are equally susceptible to the ridiculous, and find in the same a real source of refreshment and entertainment.

Throughout his whole life, General Sibley has been characterized as a man of *large-hearted benevolence*, and almost boundless *liberality*. It is hardly possible to speak of his benefactions without invading those private relations of life which are ever held sacred. Could the many, to whom he has given a home and support, or whose wants have been met by help from his hands, be marshalled to tell their story of debt to his grace, and utter their thanks, the volumes of grateful acknowledgment would swell to large dimensions, and the community wonder that such benevolence has lasted so long,

and that it still exists fresh as the day its fragrance first greeted the sense of the poor and the needy. And this flower of divine beauty whose roots are in heaven, and bloom is on earth, in the souls of noble men, is, next to a firm religious faith, the brightest ornament that can ever adorn the human character. It is enough to mention only a few of those instances history has made public, leaving more private cases to the hearts of those who have shared his bounty, and to the memorial book of him who holds alms deeds in unbroken remembrance. The timely succor sent by his hands, and drawn from his own stores, or paid from his own purse, to save the famished and starving Wahpetons, in the dreadful winter of 1834-1835, is but one illustration of his generous charity to helpless and suffering men, women, and children. He was, indeed, "the Indian's friend!" The hospitalities of his home at Mendota, for twenty-eight years, lavished without stint, or charge, or remuneration, on travelers both distinguished and undistinguished, fed by the choicest game his skill could procure, his care of strangers in distress, and his "Godspeed," and "*Au revoir*," as they left his door, are still remembered by those who survive to relate their experience. His erection of a neat church edifice, at a personal cost of nearly \$4,000, to furnish a place of worship "for Christian people of all denominations," and its care, with all the expenses, summer and winter, is another instance attesting the same high spirit of charity, and illustrating the same large-hearted and Christian good will to men. It was said in praise of a soldier of old, "*He hath built us a synagogue.*" No less can be said of him who was "first colonel" of the "first Iowa cavalry" then under Iowa jurisdiction. Of him, too, it can justly be said his "alms went up as a memorial before God." In the day when the question is asked "When saw we *thee* an hungered and fed *thee*, or thirsty and gave *thee* drink, or naked and clothed *thee*, or a stranger and took *thee* in?" And the answer is given, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of these, my brethren, ye did it to *me*," this deed, like others, will not be forgotten! While bearing the expenses of the church in Mendota, he also contributed elsewhere, and paid for his pew besides, in St. Paul, as a seat to occupy, on the Sabbath day, when away from his home. When, in 1886, the earthquake at Charleston, South Carolina, deprived 2,000 families of all their support and possessions, he was the first to appeal to the Chamber of Commerce in behalf of the suffer-

ers, and, authorized to receive and solicit help, collected and forwarded large sums of money, the executive department of the city of Charleston returning, in open letter, their "heartfelt gratitude and glad greetings for the gracious and generous giving."<sup>1</sup> Before leaving Mendota he set aside and "platted in lots," twelve acres of land, for some of the needy Indians,—to be called "Sibley's Indian Homes," and registered as such in the county records,—all to be deeded in perpetuity, upon the condition that the Indians would commence the habits of civilized life, till the soil, attend church, and send their children to school. Full of good works, when the locust plague in Minnesota ravaged whole counties, and property everywhere perished, and means of support were taken away, he devoted his time and labor, under appointment from Governor Davis, superintending the charities that flowed in on every side,—his own among the most ample,—distributing the same, accounting dollar for dollar and cent for cent, disbursing in all not less than \$20,000 in cash, and more than \$20,000 in clothing and goods. When sickness disabled that eminent man, Bishop Whipple, from performing his duties in distribution of the government's Indian annuities, and fulfillment of Indian contracts, it was General Sibley who, in relief of his friend's distress, conducted the affairs of the two agencies, discharging the whole laborious trust, refusing to accept the slightest compensation. Such acts as these, the number of which could be easily increased, are evidences of a self-sacrificing benevolence in a public man, the knowledge of whose example Minnesota can ill afford to lose.

• One further public instance of General Sibley's sympathy with his fellow man, in his "struggle to survive," stands connected with the early history of pre-emption. It will be enough to cite this as an illustration of his kindness to men at a time when others, under the same circumstances, would have fleeced the settlers of all they possessed. It was a time when the vultures, cormorants, and jay-birds, of land speculation, and the money lender at high rates, swooped down to fasten their beaks and claws in the flesh of the pioneer, and pick from his bones all that could either make him appear, or keep him, a man. The story is told in the "History of Dakota County" by the Rev. Edward D. Neill, D.D., in his usual

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<sup>1</sup> Published card in General Sibley's possession, dated Dec. 31, 1836.

elegant style, and deserves to be reproduced as a lesson from which not a few might yet learn both "humanity and kindness:"

"It is a well known fact, the knowledge of which is improved by money lenders, that interest rates, in new countries, are invariably high. Most of the early settlers in Dakota county were compelled by stern necessity to become pioneers, and were consequently often victimized by these shrewd operators whose rates were often enormous. The tender of money, at what were then considered low rates, was even looked upon with suspicion; it was considered as the first movement in some cunningly devised scheme, which should end disastrously to the borrower. In illustration of this General Sibley relates the following: 'Starting out on a hunting tour from Mendota one day, I was accosted by three men whose appearance pleased me. They inquired for me, when it appeared that they wished to enter lands on the Vermillion. A meeting was appointed and the men appeared promptly. The negotiations progressed, *but nothing was said as to the rate of interest*, until one of the number remarked that fact, and continued: We have been paying *five per cent per month* upon our loans, but that rate appears to us exorbitant; if three per cent per month, upon the present loans meets with your approval, it will be entirely satisfactory to us.

"I thereupon informed them, laughingly, that I would loan them the money at *one and a half per cent per month* and that I would be debarred from accepting a higher rate of interest, as a matter of principle.

"But the settlers were suspicious, and retired to a corner for consultation, eyeing their amused benefactor, meantime, with the sharpness of detectives. Finally, however, satisfying themselves that all was well, they accepted the money, and gave in return but a simple receipt.

"One of these men was Alidon Amidon, the first settler of Empire township; and all of them promptly responded to their obligations when asked.'

"General Sibley furnished money to *seventy-five or a hundred early settlers in this county, always on the easiest conditions, and, with only one or two exceptions, was repaid promptly and in full*. He will be long and justly remembered by them for his humanity and kindness."

The stream of such "humanity and kindness" has not ceased to flow. A half-century has only deepened its channel and widened its banks. Perpetually, the poor man, and the man in straitened circumstances, seek the door of the great benefactor. Even yet the red man has not forgotten where help and a heart can be found. It is from the pen of an eye-witness, the following incident, published, to-day, in the *St. Paul Dispatch*, is taken:

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<sup>1</sup> History of Dakota County, by Rev. E. D. Neill, pp. 209, 210.



"If there is another man in St. Paul annoyed as much as the gentleman I had the good fortune to call upon yesterday afternoon, I sympathize with him. I actually listened to the begging of six persons while in his office only an hour," was the conversation overheard at the Ryan last night. Continuing, the speaker said: "First came an Indian who had a sick squaw, then a representative of a church who wanted a donation of a cool hundred dollars for a church four miles in the country, and so on. He told me that it was a daily occurrence to find these people waiting for him to ask a favor. This man is so well known, and has done so much for Minnesota and its people, that whenever those who knew him years ago become embarrassed in any way they go directly to him. All the Indians in this part of the country know him, and would do anything for him; but they are not backward about continually asking pecuniary favors. Do you know who he is? His office is on the ground floor of the *Globe* building." "You mean General Sibley?" "Yes. I was there the other day when he generously opened his purse to a poor woman who made an appeal for assistance."

It is *characteristic* of the man! His charity, which an apostle exalts above all graces,—charity, double-aimed, toward God and man, and without which all mere profession, and gifts of men, are as blaring trombones and the clash of brazen cymbals. In presence of this, the statesman, orator, debater, and man of letters and business affairs, sinks to a second place, and when "earth to earth," is spoken, by this divine element, the noblest and greatest of all, he will be best and longest remembered. It is his moral sympathy that is the jewel in the ring of all his excellence, and has made him what he is, and has been during a long and eventful life. Churches, institutions, asylums, homes of refuge, schools of industry and reform, and families, all have confessed themselves debtors to his bounty. Individual obligations are still more numerous. He has been, and yet is, a friend to the poor, a protector to the widow, a guardian of the fatherless, a guide to the stranger, a sympathizer with the sufferer, a brother in affliction, a parent in counsel. No man can say that General Sibley ever stood with face averted from the suppliant who entreated his favor, or turned away with a harsh word, or a scowl, the wretch who besought his compassion. The breath of his universal benevolence salutes all mankind. His name is written in the clouds, and the winds waft it all over the state. A reservoir, hundreds drink and have drank of his streams. A sun, as many warm themselves in his beams. Virtues like these, attested by voices on all sides, and by the public press itself, in ever-repeated proclamation, can, as

little, remain unacknowledged, by all, as the air remain unbreathed by those who have lungs, or the light unseen by those who have eyes.

As a cyclic historian, scanning the whole circle of General Sibley's career, we have no apology to make for saying things which a false conventionalism, and a perverted taste, and, perhaps, a gangrened envy, would, under the plea of propriety, postpone till the man, whose adornment they are, lies dumb, deaf, blind, and pulseless, in his coffin. The natural modesty of their possessor may shrink—if his eyes shall happen to look on these lines—from their public mention, but they are public already, as the man himself, and the rights of those who have found his favor must be respected, and claim their free expression. The Delphic oracle did not scruple to pronounce Socrates "*the wisest of men*," even while yet alive, and a greater than Socrates hastened to say of a poor woman whose love had anointed his head, "*She hath wrought a good work on me! Verily I say unto you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, that, also, which this woman hath done, shall be spoken as a memorial of her.*" So far as the power of example goes, good deeds, uncelebrated, are as if never performed, even as valor, unknown, differs in nothing from cowardice fast asleep in the grave. We honor ourselves more, and set a better example, and display a better character, by the absence of envy, and presence of grateful tribute to the living, for the noble deeds they have done, and what they have been, and are, than, by meanly pleading "propriety," steal from a man his right to the praise of his fellows, before Death has called for his shroud. General Sibley has conquered a large place in the hearts of Minnesotians, who have not been slow to let it be known, and, for a historian to withhold the "reason why," would be a crime against manliness, justice, conscience, and honor, and a forfeiture of the decent respect of the world. To say that he who is justly styled the "First Citizen of Minnesota," and honored with so many marks of distinction, and bearing a character so unblemished and good, has been, or is, without the infirmities and faults that belong to a human sinner, or even to a saint, is to belie the history of mankind, and contradict the word that speaks from above.

True virtue still some faults must own,  
The best of men besetting ;  
But mercy to such souls is shown,  
Their faults and sins regretting.

The faultless saint is but a myth,  
Himself, not me, deceiving ;  
While he who rests, alone, in faith,  
His blest reward's receiving.

In a closing chapter, it is only proper that a word should be spoken in reference to the *home* of General Sibley, and in doing so it will not be deemed inappropriate to revert, a moment, to his first residence at Mendota, notwithstanding brief allusion to this has already been made. Midway between St. Paul and Minneapolis, couching in a natural amphitheatre of rare beauty, over which the hills, two hundred feet high, stand guard, and commanding an entrancing view of the "meeting of the waters," the Minnesota winding in on the left and the Mississippi flowing in on the right, stands, in "Mendota," the old ruin of the house where General Sibley first made his proper home. An ordinary stone hotel, a Catholic church, a cemetery adjoining, a school house, a post office, one or two country stores, railroad tracks, and a few stragglers in the streets, are its present accompaniments, the features of the spot Mr. Douglas desired to make the capital of Minnesota. The house we speak of is stone, and erected by Mr. Sibley in 1836, a building of plain but substantial character, two stories high, with a portico in front, entered not only from front and rear, but also by a flight of steps ascending outside to a small square gallery connecting with the second story, the whole inclosed in a garden surrounded by a picket fence afterward replaced by one more neat and costly. The main room on the ground floor, first of all, was the business office of Mr. Sibley, where traders and Indians gathered to transact their affairs, and in which stood a business desk, chairs, benches, book-shelves freighted with books, and papers of all descriptions. To these was added a safe,—the first ever made in the region before it became a territory,—constructed of solid oak plank two and a half inches thick, unpainted, bound with iron bars, and studded with huge nails, the door of the safe swinging on iron hinges weighing at least ten pounds,—a marvel of security for those days. Distant from the house, three hundred feet, stood the barn, where six fine

horses, a large elk, and favorite cattle, enjoyed a shelter in the winter time. Near the barn stood the capacious dog-house, divided into compartments to keep the pugnacious by themselves, the whole pack, soon as Mr. Sibley appeared in the morning, with his rifle on his shoulder, and bugle at his lips, setting up such a "concert of sweet sounds"—each dog with peculiar howl, or high-keyed note—as made the hills vocal with the echoes of their canine music. The business office, at length, as the life of the bachelor gave way to one more blissful, became a parlor whose floor was covered with a body Brussels carpet, on which stood a piano, the first one brought to this region, a huge Canada stove capable of holding unsplit wood of half a cord's length,<sup>1</sup> sofas, arm chairs, and other furniture of good quality, and pictures of various kinds adorning the walls. On the first floor, also, was the hall and the dining room, three bedrooms occupying the space in the second story. Two additions to the house, one for a bedroom, and one for an office, completed the domestic premises. Such was the hospitable mansion of the noble pioneer, the spot where so many distinguished men found a temporary sojourn during their explorations, and whose first tenant, next to Mr. Sibley, was the celebrated Captain Marryatt. Here Mr. and Mrs. Sibley passed the earlier days of their married life. Here the venerable Mrs. Steele, the mother of Mrs. Sibley, and her daughter Mary Steele found a home. Here Mrs. Abbie A. Potts and Mrs. Rachel Johnson were united in wedlock, and saw the happiest days it has been their earthly lot to know. Everything was plain, neat, solid, comfortable, inexpensive, and crowned, as to social life, with amusements, incidents, and events, sometimes comic to the last degree, sometimes painful as death stole away the babe from its mother's arms,—experiences not soon to be forgotten. To him who visits Mendota, now, and, filled with the recollection of the past, gazes on the ruin of the old home, which—could its broken walls, dilapidated rooms, and desolated garden, find a

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<sup>1</sup> About fifty years ago, General H. H. Sibley brought to this country a large Canada stove which has been in constant use every winter since he purchased it,—save a few years past. It warmed him when a young bachelor. It warmed both him and his young wife. His children were born and reared around it, and his grandchildren have played and prattled about it. It has been a faithful friend and is about as good to-day as it was when he first brought it to the territory, but the styles have changed and this venerable stove, although only in the prime of its usefulness, has had to give way to a new pattern,—not so good but more sightly. As a relic of the past it is now stored away in the attic, surrounded by the pleasant memories of a half-century.—St. Paul Dispatch, 1882.

tongue — would tell of happier days and brighter scenes, forever gone, the contemplation can only be that of sadness, if not of tears.

But there are compensations for the changes Time creates. On Woodward avenue, one of the broad promenades of the city of St. Paul, laid out in what was once the finest part of the city, and, now, not far from Lafayette Park, stands the present residence of General Sibley. The location enjoys all the advantages of both country and city, not only convenient to the thoroughfares of business, but attractive by its surroundings composed of substantial houses placed in the centre of lawns extensive and kept with scrupulous care, adorned with majestic trees and various flowers, presenting a scene of calm and quiet beauty. The homes of the denizens of this locality bespeak, for their owners, the possession of wealth, refinement, and taste, and the comforts of life. On the upper side of the avenue is the fine mansion of General Sibley, massive and solid, quadrangular form, two stories high, surmounted by a cupola, and described as "the result of an evolution from the original shanty which he saw erected on the present site of the city, and, like himself, the perfected development of an original product which, at first, was planted in the crude soil of a savage wilderness."<sup>1</sup> The ground on which it rests has a frontage of three hundred and thirty-three feet, running back two hundred and twenty feet, the whole beautified with the waving foliage of the oak, the maple, and the box-elder, rows of magnificent and stately elms lining the sidewalk, distant from which the mansion stands nearly one hundred feet, embowered within the arbored ground, and accessible by paved and graveled walks. The interior of the mansion, with its high ceilings, large doors, broad staircase, heavy rails, elaborate chandeliers, frescoes, and fine tapestry, reminds one of the grandeur of baronial times, where all was simple as solid, and taste was without the glare of a tinsel and tawdry ornamentation, and comfort without the expense of a vain and worthless luxury. There is nothing to pamper the extravagance of a millionaire. There is everything to satisfy the desire of a man well-to-do, and not ambitious of vain display. The furniture is of the most substantial kind, and the decorations, while, of necessity, many, are yet chaste, elegant, and appropriate.

<sup>1</sup> Chicago Times, Jan. 30, 1886.

To the left of the main hall, below, is the sitting room, where, during the afternoons and evenings of the day,—his business hours, at his office in the *Globe* building, ending at 1:30 P. M.,—the General is found, first indulging, as the state of his health and fatigue require, a brief post-prandial nap, and next, after the time for supper has passed, improving the hours, by reading the various papers of the day, writing his private correspondence, receiving his friends, or enjoying the society of his family. At the far side of the room, having passed the piano and centre-table, and under the corner gas-light, his open cabinet filled with books, and letters, and files of papers, and standing against the wall, is placed a capacious chair, well cushioned and strong, in which the General, seated at ease, golden spectacles adjusted in proper position, newspaper lifted and held at the right distance, his tall form stretched to the footstool, and the light blazing, devours the latest intelligence, near and remote, and posts himself in reference to the commercial, civil, political, religious, and military condition of the world. His encyclopædic appetite for knowledge, even at seventy-eight years, remains unimpaired by dyspeptic ailment, and his intellectual digestion is as perfect as when in the prime of life. It is his special pleasure, also, to recite to his friends, the scenes of by-gone days, the hardships and toils, the dangers and delights, and duties and responsibilities of his long career; his fur trade experience, his Indian life, his efforts for the church and the school, and the later events connected with the organization of the Territory and State of Minnesota. On the wall, in front of where he sits, hangs the splendid oil painting of his favorite hunting dog, "Lion," in a frame 7 feet long by 5 wide, displaying the life size of the noble animal 5 feet 3 inches in length, and 2 feet 8 inches in height, the pointer in posture ready to leap for the prey. "*Noble animal he was,*" says the General, with a tone of affectionate sadness, a smile of satisfaction, and a gaze steady and intense, at the grand object on the wall. Behind the large chair hangs another oil painting, that of "Mendota in 1836," with its few lone hamlets, plumed Indian in the foreground, the high bluffs, behind Mendota, overlooking the Mississippi and Fort Snelling. Next to that is a large photograph of the "Old Settlers Association," in which the early and representative men of Minnesota are seen. On the other walls of the sitting room are hung two splendid en-



gravings of the United States Senate, in 1850, the one representing Daniel Webster, the other Henry Clay, addressing that remarkable body of men, on the "Compromise measures" of that agitated time. In the background of the first, and standing near Winthrop, the Hon. H. H. Sibley's tall figure appears. Also two fine engravings from London, one the "English Gamekeeper," the other the "Scotch Gamekeeper," attended by their dogs, and bearing their game. An engraving of "Shakespeare and his friends," an engraving and crayon of Commodore Kittson, a crayon of his son Alfred, and near to these, arranged in order, fine photographs of his son Frederick, Major Generals Halleck, Hancock, Fremont, Curtis, and Johnson, Senator Douglas, Mrs. Steele the mother of Mrs. Sibley, the reverend Drs. James McCosh, Francis L. Patton, and Professors Young and Sloane of Princeton College, an engraving of Mr. Josiah Sibley of Augusta, Georgia, also two engravings of himself, one in civil dress, when in Congress, and one in the military costume of a general,—these, with other minor decorations, and a pen and ink sketch of the "Old Mendota Home," complete the artistic embellishments of this domestic and quiet room. As the hours pass on, his serene engrossment with the newspaper, or the volume, is sometimes interrupted by the agreeable and teasing importunities of Mrs. Potts, or some members of the family, beseeching him to please be more attentive to themselves and less devoted to the printer! On the right side of the main hall is the capacious and well-furnished parlor, on whose tables are placed various Indian relics, and whose walls are made instructive with oil and water pictures of the choicest quality. Among these are a large equestrian oil painting of General Sibley reviewing his troops, and painted, in 1878, by Colonel Fairman, a woodland painting of rare excellence, by Larpenteur, with browsing cattle near the banks of the Mississippi, the celebrated painting of "Othello and Desdemona," the "Magdalen," "Les Preludes de Bach," "Le Gynécée," and two fine large crayons, one of the General, the other of Mrs. Sibley. On the tables are statuettes in Parian marble, and other ornamental figures, all which, with the various hangings, and large plants, stationed in different places, give to the parlor a finished and pleasing appearance. Next to the sitting room is the library, where shelves are packed with hundreds of volumes, encyclopædias, official documents, state and congressional papers, works on treaties and



constitutional law, law books, histories, biographies, the poets, and, in short, all that goes to make up the library of a man of letters, or an accomplished servant of the state and nation.

And, here, in this home of neatness and comfort, he lives, and makes welcome his friends and his guests, the receiver of visits, at times, from men of distinction, who, journeying westward, or eastward, tarry a moment to call and salute "the man of the state." To see him, in private life, one would scarce take him to be the Indian hunter of fifty years ago. There is not a line of the rough, the rude, or the coarse, about him. His benevolent face, and pleasing expression, his generous disposition, refined manners, with great firmness of will, while yet obliging, sociable, kind, alike attract and impress. No man would dare to be unduly familiar or impolite. And yet, his spirits are buoyant and sometimes playful, though changing again to the solemn and serious side of life. He is mindful of what is due, not only to personal respect, but to the ties of blood, the habits of friendship, and the obligations imposed by attentions of others,—confining his visits, however, in later years, to the narrower circle of long-cherished and older friends. None can enjoy his society and not feel that he deserves a tribute in measure greater than yet has appeared;—a man so free from the airs of the mere pretender, and the style of a money king! He is no traitor to men, no betrayer of his friends, no selfish calculator at the expense of others' convenience. With the slanderer and conspirator he has no fellowship. True, helpful, and just, he is the pride of his house, and moves among men, a soul of honor, disdaining a deed of reproach, and preferring exile or death to shame. His hospitality is ever the same that it was in his youth, and peace, contentment, and plenty, bless his pillow and board.

Such, in his waning years, is the present home, and life, of the man who, more than half a century ago, was the adventurous youth, trader, and hunter, in the wilds of Minnesota. While others have labored to amass vast fortunes, and devoted their lives to mere material pursuits, or, by political fortune, or commercial land speculation, have acquired great wealth, he has desired a higher and nobler aim, and, contenting himself with the golden mean,

“Escapes alike from all  
 The squalor of a sordid cot,  
 And from the jealousies begot  
 By wealth in lordly hall.”

Like the laureate of Augustus, turning away from the splendors of a court, and the miser grasp of men who live but to amass their wealth and lavish it on homes built of costliest stone, adorned with rarest wood, and furnishings from every land and sea, unmindful of their fate, he too can say,

“Within my dwelling you behold  
 Nor ivory nor roof of gold;  
 There, no Hymettian rafters weigh  
 On columns sent from Africa;  
 Nor Attalus’ imperial chair  
 Have I usurped, a spurious heir.

\* \* \* \* \*

“But a true heart, and genial vein  
 Of wit are mine, and rich men deign,  
 Such as I am, to seek my door.  
 For nought beyond do I implore,  
 Than this, nor crave my potent friend  
 A larger bounty to extend.

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“Day treads on day, and sinks amain,  
 And new moons only wax and wane,  
*Yet men, upon death’s very brink,*  
*Of piling marbles only think,*  
 Which yet are in the quarry’s womb,  
 And,—*all unmindful of the tomb,*  
 Rear gorgeous mansions everywhere,  
 As though the earth too bounded were!”<sup>1</sup>

Such, the pleasant and comfortable home, and such, the quiet and calm philosophy of him who, in his early days, was the Nimrod of his time, the owner of six splendid horses, twenty-three of the finest dogs in all the region, six double-barreled shot-guns, three rifles, besides his holster-pistols, with which he commanded the respect of the savages, amused himself in the intervals between the seasons of active business, and won for himself a name that made him the fit leader of the expeditions against the Sioux, in the years of 1862 and 1863. It is only right that the close of a career, so full of wonder as his, should bring the reward of all these temporal benedictions; especially to one who now, as ever, is prodigal of that same hospitality which endeared him to all who came in contact with him.

<sup>1</sup> Horace, Odes, Lib. II., Ode XVIII.

Nor is the "Sibley mansion" the only spot where his name is associated with the scenes and times of his eventful life. He has left his impress on the geography of three different states, and in more than one municipality. "Sibley's Indian Homes," his generous gift to tempt the red man to a better future, are a witness to his character and influence. From section 27 to section 37, behind Mendota, is "Augusta lake," so called in honor of his eldest daughter. By unanimous consent of the original proprietors, what now is "Hastings City" derived its name from Henry Hastings Sibley. The city council of St. Paul have named their "Sibley street." "Sibley lake," "Sibley crossing," and "Sibley island," in Dakota and on the Missouri river, were dedicated such, as a consequence of the Sioux campaign of 1863; and in the State of Iowa, the town of "Sibley" has just been christened to perpetuate his fame. Still other tokens of esteem are in the future, not the least of which will be the "Sibley monument." A coming generation will be just. Had Fortune given him the vast wealth other men have, the city of St. Paul, ere this, had been debtor to his generous hand for some proud and enduring memorial, built for the good of his fellow man, or some magnificent donation, like that of his friend Pillsbury, to the State University.

An early riser, impatient for the duties of the day, and burdened with a multitude of cares, he takes his morning meal and hastens to his work. He dreads inaction. On the ground floor of the east side of the *Globe* building is the place in which he transacts his business. A modest room, it is yet interesting in various respects. One entering, during the hours of business, will find the General, gold spectacles on, seated in front of his large desk, crowded with papers and letters, and files, busy at work. On the top of the desk, rests the Princeton diploma. To the right, and high on the wall, hangs a splendid oil portrait of the charming daughter of Mrs. S. McKnight, a *chef d'œuvre de beauté*, painted by her mother, one of the most accomplished women and artists of the day. Contrasted with this, on the wall at the left of the desk, hangs the large crayon of "Old Bets," a character well known, an Indian captive redeemed by General Sibley from the grasp of Little Crow. Two large pictures, one the "Execution of the Thirty-eight Indians, the other "President Cleveland and His Cabinet," beside a water-color of a

"Sioux Scalping a Chippewa," serve also to vary the decoration. A *fac-simile* of the last trembling signature of the dying German emperor, William, the photographs of two Indians, "Medicine Bottom" and "Shakopee," with the latest steel engraving of himself, sum up the ornaments of this last laboratory of the Prince of Pioneers. Conducted to this spot, every morning, save Sunday, he performs the duties that call for his presence. In his modest vehicle behind his old but grand "white horse,"—an object of attraction to the city,—his faithful "John," a Swede devoted to his master, drives him daily to the office, and shortly after the meridian, returns him to his mansion. And thus, day follows day, in swift succession, the years revolving, and hastening, to its last and narrow house, the form now beginning to bend with age, and soon to be removed from the land of the living.

*"Nos, nostraque, debemur morti"*

is written on all sublunary things, and on the loftiest of men.

"Down to the tomb  
Your heads must come!  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust!"

The death of Mrs. Sibley, May 21, 1869, due chiefly to the double bereavement suffered by the loss of two of her children, during the absence of her husband when leading the expedition against the Sioux Indians in 1863, bore heavily upon the General. In addition to the loss of five children, the loved mother of them all had been removed, lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends. The entire family register of Mr. and Mrs. General Sibley is, in its order, (1) Augusta (Mrs. Captain Douglas Pope), (2) Henry Hastings, who died in infancy, (3) Henry Hastings, again, who died in infancy,—the Power who rules all things seeming to deny the father's name to any living son, (4) Sarah Jane (Mrs. Elbert A. Young), (5) Franklin Steele, deceased, (6) Mary Steele, deceased;—these last two, the children who died while their father was in the field fighting the Sioux, and so touchingly bewailed as "*Little Mamie*" and "*Dear Frank*" in his military diary,—(7) Alexander, deceased, (8) Charles Frederick, (9) Alfred Brush; nine children in all, four still surviving; two daughters, Mrs. Douglas Pope, and Mrs. Elbert A. Young; two sons, Charles Frederick and Alfred Brush.

The children of Mrs. Pope are Alice, Augusta, and Elsie. Those of Mrs. Young are Henry Sibley, Cornelia, and Elbert A. The surviving sisters of Mrs. Sibley are Mrs. Dr. Potts<sup>1</sup> and Mrs. General Johnson,<sup>2</sup> named before. The children of Mrs. Potts are Mary Steele (Mrs. Crawford Livingston), Henry Sibley Potts, John Charles Potts, Abbie (Mrs. Charles McIntyre). The children of Mrs. Livingston are Crawford, Mary Steele, Abbie Potts, Henry Sibley, Gerald. The children of Mrs. McIntyre are Alice, Charles, and Helen, one, the eldest, William, having died in infancy. The children of Mrs. Johnson are Lieutenant Alfred B., United States Army, Richard W., medical department United States Army, and Henry Sibley. The children of Lieutenant Alfred B. Johnson are Kitty Smyth Johnson and Rachel Louise Johnson. Of the family of Dr. John Steele of St. Paul, deceased,—one of the brothers of Mrs. Potts and Mrs. Johnson,—three still survive, Charles Steele (married Fanny Dawson), Jane R. Steele (Mrs. Dr. E. J. Abbott), and Clara Steele (Mrs. George Duffield Slaymaker). The one child of Mrs. Charles Steele is named for his father, Charles. The children of Mrs. Dr. E. J. Abbott are Catherine, John, Lorina, Rachel, and Theodore.<sup>3</sup> The immediate household of General Sibley is composed of his eldest daughter Mrs. Douglas Pope and her three daughters, Alice,

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1 Dr. Thomas R. Potts was born in Philadelphia, 1810; graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, 1831; resided at Natchez, Mississippi, 1831-1841; removed to Galena, Illinois, 1841; came to St. Paul, 1849; lived in St. Paul twenty-six years, being surgeon at Fort Snelling, medical purveyor of the district, physician to the Sioux; in 1850, president of the town board; in 1866, city physician; health officer in 1873; married to Abbie A. Steele in 1847; died in St. Paul, 1874, age sixty-four years. Dr. Potts was, at the time of his death, the oldest practicing physician in the State of Minnesota, and one of the most distinguished, "an institution" of himself, of fine personal presence, social, kind-hearted, and greatly respected.

2 Brevet Major General R. W. Johnson was born in Livingston county, Kentucky, 1827; graduated at United States Military Academy, West Point, and reported for duty at Fort Snelling, 1849; second lieutenant First Infantry, Fort Duncan, Texas, 1850; adjutant Second Infantry, 1853; first lieutenant Second Cavalry, 1855; captain Company "F," 1856; escaped, when the Civil War broke out, from Texas, and reported at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 1861; lieutenant colonel Third Kentucky Cavalry, colonel United States Army and brigadier general Volunteers, 1861; brevet major general United States Volunteers, 1865. He served gallantly in the Siege of Corinth, pursuit of Morgan, battles of Stone River, Liberty Gap, Chicamauga, Missionary Ridge, and in the campaign against Atlanta. After the Civil War was provost marshal of the military division of the Mississippi, then judge advocate of the same, and of the department of the Cumberland, and on account of wounds, was placed on the retired list, 1867, and still lives, 1889, his age sixty-two years, hearty and hale, a useful and active citizen.

3 The Hon. Franklin Steele, brother of Dr. John Steele, Mrs. Dr. Potts, and Mrs. General Johnson, married Annie Barney of Baltimore. Both are deceased. The family register gives the children's names as Mary C., Kate O., Rosa P., Franklin, Jr., Fanny, Sarah, Carrie, William E.; eight in all.

Augusta, and Elsie, his son, Mr. Alfred B. Sibley, besides Mrs. Dr. Potts and her son Charles. Surrounded by his surviving children and grandchildren, and the large and influential relationship just named, nephews, nieces, cousins, and connections, with a host of much endeared friends, all vying with each other to minister, the most, their kindly offices, the "Patriarch of Three Generations," and "Prince of Minnesota's Pioneers," enjoys the evening of his life, nearing the horizon line, and, though setting like the sun, yet lingering, as if to leave a blessing, throwing back, on all beholders, the rays of his departing light.

In retiring from the task we began,—viz., to trace in outline, the "*Ancestry, Life, and Times*" of the Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley,—a sense of wonder, and sometimes of sadness and awe, steals over us, as the concentration of the whole panorama seems, for a moment, to converge from all sides, and present itself to us in one compacted picture. The Norman Conquest; the Middle Ages; the wars of the houses of York and Lancaster; the times of the Pilgrims and the English Commonwealth; the Winthrop Fleet and the great immigration; the Colonial and Revolutionary times; the settlement of the Northwest; the ordinance of 1787; the advent of Solomon Sibley, the father of Henry, to Detroit; the birth of Henry; Sault Ste. Marie; Mackinac and the fur trade; the partnership of young Sibley; his journey to Prairie du Chien, and thence to the "meeting of the waters;" his Indian life; his congressional; his territorial and state life; his military life; his life as a private citizen; and now, still living, and increasing in his years;—what histories, memories, scenes, events, and changes, not only pass before us, but crowd themselves into one conception, vivid, oppressive, and overpowering! Passing away and coming, coming and passing away,—“one generation coming and another going,”—this is the law of progress;—the sons of Japhet ordained to expansion, a forward march and extension, the savage tribes retreating, and the forests falling, before them, the world's conquest their ultimate prize!

To this pioneer race, Henry Hastings Sibley has belonged, and played his part in blazing a path through new and untrodden wilds, now crowned with the efflorescence of a mighty civilization. The cathedral of Milan rises from the ground, surrounded at its base by rude barbaric figures, its roof sur-

mounted with 6,000 pinnacles on which stand saints and angels, their heads sky-lancing and glittering with light, the intermediate architecture showing the progress from Barbarism to Civilization, and from Civilization to Christianity. It is a grand poem in stone! What monument should not the wealth and resources of a state like Minnesota rear to the memory of the brave pioneers, among whom Henry Hastings Sibley stood, and stands, the first and the tallest, and now survives as the oldest of all? What device better than some proud pile at whose base the Indian and mound, the wigwam and bounding buffalo, and elk, and deer, shall be seen, its summit crowned with twin figures of the two great cities of the state, the intermediate construction showing the upward progress from savage to civilized life,—Sibley below in his Indian attire, Sibley above in citizen's dress,—*a half-century scene*, the like of which is without a mate in the world! Fifteen years, in the solitude of a pre-territorial life, he,—the phosphor of the morning,—shed his beams athwart the region over which the rising sun of civilization had not yet lifted his golden brow. Fifteen years,—much of the time in Indian costume,—he antedated the advent of the men whose names are inseparably bound with the actual organization of the Territory of Minnesota. He passed under four successive territorial jurisdictions, without once changing his residence at Mendota! On the territorial seal, devised by Governor Ramsey and General Sibley, are displayed the Falls of St. Anthony in the distance, the immigrant plowing the border of the Indian's land and looking wistfully beyond, as if anxious to plow still more, the Indian amazed at the sight and speeding in full flight to the setting sun! And General Sibley has lived to see this symbol, and all it implies, translated into actual fact. What changes since 1858, when Minnesota was admitted as a state! What greater changes since 1849, when Minnesota was organized as a territory! And what, greatest of all, since 1834, when Henry H. Sibley planted his feet on the hills behind Mendota!—"four hamlets" then in the little amphitheatre, all the rest a wide wilderness; but now the splendid cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis seated—like queens with crowns on their heads—on places young Sibley trod as his hunting ground, and where the Indian war-whoop echoed through the trees!—*then* only a "few hundred of whites in all the region," an area of 83,000 square miles and 56,000,000 of acres, but, *now*, a population of nearly 1,500,000 souls!



Let him, who can, compose the volume that shall draw the full contrast between "*Then*" and "*Now!*" *Tu eris Marcellus!* The man who sees the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis sees two mighty wonders, if only he thinks of the transformation. But he whose fortune it is to look on General Sibley, sees a mightier wonder still! Wonderful life, of a wonderful man! His eyes have not been denied the vision that "wise men, prophets, and kings, desired to see, but died without the sight!" In that prophetic symbol, apocalypsed on the territorial seal, his inward sense foresaw what the Hiawatha of the poet sang:

"All the secrets of the future,  
Of the distant days that shall be:  
And, with these, the westward marches  
Of the unknown, crowding nations,  
All the land so full of people,  
Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,  
Speaking many tongues, yet feeling  
But one heart-beat in their bosom."<sup>1</sup>

It is time to say "*Adieu!*" When, in coming years, the just tribute of admiration shall be paid to the pioneer, the Indian hunter, the legislator, the statesman, the orator, the governor, soldier, husband, father, and friend, who has been the subject of this volume, none will say that we have over-rated his merits, or been too profuse in our praise of his virtues, or too minute in our faint memorial of his services. Take him as a man, survey him in what light we will, accord to others, his contemporaries, the full meed of praise due to their noble deeds, and self-denying toils, to help redeem a wilderness, and found a state, still Henry Hastings Sibley stands second to none on the scroll of fame. He is the *central figure* around which all other figures group themselves. It was he who gave, in 1834, the first impulse of real value to all commercial enterprises of the region which even then was without a special name. It was he who, from 1849 to 1853, gave again a fresh impulse, in the organization of the territory, more than any other man, and, by his efforts in the halls of Congress, put it on its path to a swift and prosperous statehood. First governor of the state, in 1858, it was he who, in 1862, assumed the military dress, led the main expedition

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow's Poems. Song of Hiawatha, The White Foot, XXI. For the curious and interesting story of Hiawatha, or Manabozho, the Great Prophet of the Indian tribes,—the prime legend of the Indian mythology, consult "The Myth of Hiawatha, and other Legends," by Henry R. Schoolcraft, LL.D. Philad. Lippincott, 1856, pp. 18-51, 189-193.

against the Sioux Nation, as also in 1863, defeated the foe in five severe engagements, delivered the captives, cleared the state of its enemy, and gave security to the homes, and peace to the citizens, of Minnesota. It was his tongue, and his pen, his soul, and his unflinching courage, more than those of any other man, which rescued the state from reproach, and her countenance from shame. What he accomplished, and what he attempted to do, and what, by example, he still is doing,—even while “the golden bowl is breaking, and the silver cord is loosening,” will be had in remembrance long as the state survives, or her records have room to engrave a name. Our task is done.

“Firm, incorrupt, as in life’s dawning morn,  
Nor swayed by novelty, nor public breath,  
False censure and false fame he hears, to scorn,  
And, upright, moves through Honor’s path to death.

“His name, time-honored, stands; a tower  
Impregnable, a bulwark of the state,  
Untouched by Envy’s visionary power,  
Rampired,—invulnerable,—great!”

## PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

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In taking leave of the literary labor to which I have been called in the preparation of this volume, I desire to express my grateful acknowledgments to the many and kind courtesies extended to me by Mr. J. Fletcher Williams, the accomplished librarian of the Minnesota Historical Society, as also to his very obliging assistant, Mr. J. B. Chayne. The access allowed me to the shelves of valuable collections in the state capitol, and to bound volumes of the city newspapers for years past, has contributed much to secure, in many instances, the needed information. To Mrs. Helen H. McCaine, librarian of the City Library, thanks are due, as also to her assistants, for their polite and prompt response to calls many times made upon their attention and time, as also for the privilege of access to the shelves of that institution. To the Hon. Charles E. Flandrau, Major General R. W. Johnson, and others among the older citizens of St. Paul, I am indebted for important instruction in reference to certain parts of the preceding narrative relating to civil and military matters; as I am, also, in larger measure, to the venerable and honorable H. H. Sibley himself. Finally, my thanks are due to the gentlemanly corps of librarians of the Astor Library, New York, for their many accommodations and generous supply of expensive and standard works, needed for consultation as to ancestral lines, and ancient facts, in English history; works not yet found in our Western cities.

NATHANIEL WEST.

ST. PAUL, September 1, 1889.

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## APPENDIX.

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I.

MAIDEN SPEECH

OF

HON. HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY OF WISCONSIN  
TERRITORY,

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. DELIVERED DECEMBER 22, 1848, OPENING OF SECOND SESSION THIRTIETH CONGRESS.

(See pp. 103-111.)

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MR. CHAIRMAN: Having been elected by the people of Wisconsin Territory to represent their interests, as a delegate in the Congress of the United States, I should consider myself as recreant to the trust reposed in me by those who have honored me with their confidence, did I not take every proper means to secure my seat, and be thus placed in a position where I may render some service to my constituents. No question has been, or can be, raised with regard to the legality of the election. The certificate of the acting governor is *prima facie* evidence of the fact. It remains, then, only to show, if possible, that the residuum of Wisconsin Territory, after the admission of the state, remained in the possession of the same rights and immunities which were secured to the people of the whole territory by the organic law. In doing this, I shall be as brief as the nature of the case will admit; but, being convinced that a favorable report from your honorable committee is vitally important, I must be permitted to present all the facts bearing upon the case, and sustain, by such arguments as I may, based upon the facts, the position assumed by those who sent me here.

The honorable gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Boyden), at your previous meeting, attempted to show that the act for the admission of the State of Wisconsin was, *ipso facto*, a repeal of the organic law of the territory. To support this proposition, he supposed a case in which all the population of

a territory should be included within the limits of a state, except a few individuals, or one man, who might elect one of their number, or himself, as a delegate to Congress, and be entitled to admission, upon the principle assumed in the present case. Mr. Chairman, I might meet this fairly by another supposition by no means so improbable. It was seriously contemplated, by a respectable portion of the people, to ask Congress to make the Wisconsin river the northern boundary of the state of that name. If this had been done, some fifteen or twenty thousand inhabitants would have been left in precisely the same situation in which the present population of Wisconsin Territory now find themselves. Would Congress have refused, under such circumstances, to receive a delegate elected by the people according to the provisions of the organic law? The case supposed is an extreme one. Congress has full power to prevent any abuse of such privileges. But when a large portion of a territory is left without the boundaries of a state, and no provision is made for repealing or modifying the organic law, does not that very fact, taken in connection with the obligation of a government to afford to all its citizens the protection of law, make it perfectly clear that the residuum remains under the full operation of the same organic law? To suppose otherwise would be to maintain that a government has the right, at pleasure, to deprive its citizens of all civil rights, a hypothesis repugnant to the spirit of our institutions and of the age.

The imprescriptible, inalienable, birthright of the subject is laid down as one of the national rights of citizenship, of which none can be deprived without their consent. (*Payley's Phil., B. VI., chap. 3. Judge Iredell in Talbot vs. Janson, 3 Dall. Rep. 133.*) Vattel, in his Law of Nations, B. 1, chap. 2, thus lays down the rule: "If a nation is obliged to preserve itself, it is no less obliged carefully to preserve all its members." And again: "The body of a nation cannot, then, abandon a province, a town, or even a single individual who is a part of it, unless compelled to do it by necessity, or indispensably obliged to do it, for the strongest reasons, founded on the public safety."

Having thus shown that the point of international law, as received by all civilized countries, is clearly in our favor, I will merely quote a paragraph of the ordinance of 1787, as applicable to the country northwest of the Ohio river. This



guarantees to all the inhabitants of that region the possession of "the benefits of *habeas corpus*, and trial by jury, of a proportionate representation in the legislature, and of judicial proceedings, according to the course of the common law." We are a part and parcel of the people to whom were secured these blessings, and a decision which would deprive us of the right to be represented on the floor of Congress would virtually annul all these guarantees, and reduce society into its original elements.

I come now, Mr. Chairman, to the precedents cited in support of my claim, and to which the gentleman from North Carolina so strongly objects, inasmuch as, in his opinion, they do not cover the present case. They are those of Paul Fearing and George W. Jones. It is admitted that the former, elected as delegate from the Northwest Territory, appeared and took his seat months after the passage of the act of Congress admitting Ohio into the Union, and before any other new territorial organization had been effected. So far, then, Ohio had a perfect right to send a representative and senators to Congress. That she did not do so, affects in no manner the merits of the question. She only declined, for good and sufficient reasons, to exercise her undoubted right. During this state of things, Mr. Fearing was in his seat, not as the representative of the sovereign State of Ohio, but of the residuum of the Northwest Territory. This is a fact beyond contradiction or dispute. If Ohio had sent her representatives, they would have been admitted without question. But it is said that Mr. Fearing's right to a seat was not formally passed upon by the house. But we know that the Committee on Elections reported favorably in his case, and the fact that he retained his station until the end of the session is good evidence that the house concurred with the committee in opinion.

In the case of the Hon. George W. Jones, now a United States senator from Iowa, the circumstances, although not precisely similar, are sufficiently in point to give them authority as a precedent. Mr. Jones was elected the delegate from the Territory of Michigan, and the state had previously formed a constitution, and sent its senators and representatives here to demand admission. True, the act of Congress admitting the state not having been yet passed, they were not formally received; but it is, nevertheless, equally true that Mr. Jones was elected by the people residing out of the limits of the state,

and that he represented the interests of the residuum only. The inhabitants of the State of Michigan took no part in the election of that gentleman. Surely one or the other of the above cited cases must be allowed to be an exact precedent, if both are not to be so considered.

Mr. Chairman, the *onus probandi* must rest upon those who deny the existence of a distinct territorial government in Wisconsin Territory. The fact that the organic law gave to that territory certain privileges, among which was the right to elect a delegate to Congress, is undeniable, and it is equally certain that no subsequent action of that body abrogated any portion of that law, or divested the people of any of these privileges. The conclusion is not to be controverted, that a law of Congress creating a temporary government over a portion of the territory of the United States, must continue in force, unless repealed by the same legislative authority. The division of a territory is not the destruction thereof. That portion formed into a state, and admitted as such, has commenced a new political existence; but the residuum, not being in any wise affected thereby, remained under the operation of the old law. The sphere in which each moves is well defined, and there can be no collision between them. The very act establishing the territorial government of Wisconsin provides that Congress shall have the right to divide it into two or more territories at any time thereafter, if such a step should be deemed expedient or necessary. It did so virtually by the act admitting Wisconsin into the Union.

The honorable gentleman from North Carolina has fallen into a grievous error when he asserts that during the first grade of territorial government, that in which the legislative power was vested in the governor and judges, the government has not granted them a delegate in Congress, for Michigan was entitled to, and was represented by, a delegate years before a legislative council was vouchsafed to her. This can be ascertained by a reference to the journals of Congress. But, sir, I do not conceive this question to have any bearing upon the case before you. The people of Wisconsin Territory are not present, by their representative, to argue any question of abstract right, but to appeal to this committee to protect them in the enjoyment of those immunities which are secured to them by the solemn sanctions of law. The government of the United States, when it invited its citizens to emigrate to the

Territory of Wisconsin by the formation of a temporary government, must have intended to act in good faith toward them, by continuing over them the provisions of the organic law. Sixteen thousand acres of land have been purchased, for the most part by *bona fide* settlers, the proceeds of which have gone into your treasury. Taxed equally with other inhabitants of this Union for the support of the general government, they are certainly entitled to equal privileges.

Sir, it is a fact that the inhabitants of the region I have the honor to represent have always heretofore, since the establishment of a territorial government for Wisconsin, participated in the election of a delegate, and have enjoyed all the rights and immunities secured to them by the organic law. It is equally a fact that they have a full county organization, and form part of a judicial circuit. Congress was by no means ignorant of the existing state of things when the State of Wisconsin was admitted, for there were lying, at that time, upon the tables of both houses, petitions signed by hundreds of the citizens lying north and west of the St. Croix river, praying that they might not be included within the limits of the state, but suffered to enjoy the benefits of the territorial government. The region north and west of Wisconsin contains an area of more than 20,000 square miles, with a population of nearly, if not quite, 6,000 souls. Can a proposition be seriously entertained to disfranchise and outlaw the people? Sir, if it is determined that the territory I have come here to represent has no claim to such representation on the floor of Congress, then will one branch of the law-making power have sanctioned a principle which will scatter all the restraints of law in that region to the winds. For either the territorial organization is perfect and complete, or it has been entirely abrogated and annulled. The same authority which provides for the election of a delegate, gives the power to choose other officers. All must stand or fall together. If we have no organization, as is contended by the honorable gentleman from North Carolina, then have our judicial and ministerial officers rendered themselves liable to future punishment for a usurpation of power. If a malefactor has been apprehended, or a debtor arrested, the officers serving the writ will be visited hereafter with an action for false imprisonment. Our beautiful country will become a place of refuge for depraved and desperate characters from the neighboring states. The vast

and varied agricultural and commercial interests of the country will be involved in ruin, and all security for life and property will vanish. But, sir, I do not believe that this committee will consent to give a decision involving such a train of evils, and such utter absurdities. Not a single good reason can be assigned for perpetrating so gross an outrage upon several thousand citizens of the United States, as to divest them, at one fell stroke, of all those blessings of a legal jurisdiction which they have hitherto enjoyed, and that without any consent or agency of their own.

Sir, there are certain fixed principles of law which cannot be annulled by sophistry, or destroyed by any system of special pleading. By these eternal and immutable maxims are the duties of governments and their citizens or subjects defined, and their mutual and reciprocal obligations are not to be laid aside, or dispensed with, by either. The action of all popular governments must be of a beneficial character to the governed. The one must protect, the other obey. The former is charged with the duty of throwing around its citizens the safeguards of law, while they, on their part, are bound to uphold the majesty of that law. Circumstances of extreme danger alone can for a moment absolve either from these imperative obligations. Whence, then, is derived the power of this government to cast aside any portion of its citizens at will? Sir, when disfranchisement is visited by despotic governments upon their people, it is to mete out to them the severest punishment which can be inflicted upon a community for political offenses, short of actual extermination.

Sir, the case now before you for your action does certainly present some novel features. It is the first time since the foundation of this government that several thousand citizens of the United States have been found supplicating and pleading, by their representative, that they may not be deprived by Congress of all civil government, and thrust from its doors by a forced and constructive interpretation of a law of the land, which does not, in fact, bear even remotely upon the question. Appeals and petitions have often been made by those citizens who, having voluntarily removed from within the bounds of a legal jurisdiction, have been desirous that this blessing should be granted them, but not that what had been solemnly secured to them should not be violently withdrawn. Sir, the wants and wishes of those who sent me here

have now no advocate on the floor of Congress. These people have emigrated to the remote region they now inhabit under many disadvantages.

They have not been attracted thither by the glitter of inexhaustible gold mines, but with the same spirit which has actuated all our pioneers of civilization. They have gone there to labor with the axe, the anvil, and the plow. They have elected a delegate with the full assurance that they had a right so to do, and he presents himself here for admission. Sir, was this a question in which the consequences would be confined to me personally, the honorable members of this house would not find me here, day after day, wearying their patience by long appeals and explanations. But, believing as I do, before God, that my case, and the question whether there is any law in the Territory of Wisconsin, are intimately and indissolubly blended together, I trust that the house of representatives will, by its decision of the claim before it, establish the principle, which shall be as a landmark in all coming time, that citizens of this mighty republic, upon whom the rights and immunities of a civil government have been once bestowed by an act of Congress, shall not be deprived of these without fault or agency of their own, unless under circumstances of grave and imperious necessity, involving the safety and well being of the whole country.

**FIRST ADDRESS**  
**OF**  
**HON. HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY OF MINNESOTA**  
**TERRITORY,**  
**TO THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA TERRITORY. ISSUED FROM**  
**WASHINGTON, MARCH 10, 1849, AT CLOSE OF SEC-**  
**OND SESSION THIRTIETH CONGRESS.<sup>1</sup>**  
*(See pp. 121-135.)*

**FELLOW CITIZENS:** When a public servant has been chosen to perform certain duties in a sphere far removed from the view of his constituents, it is customary and proper that, upon surrendering his trust he should give an account of his stewardship. As it is impossible to communicate with you all, orally, scattered as you are over an immense extent of country, I have decided upon this mode of address, that you may be made acquainted in brief terms with the obstacles which I have had to encounter, and those measures of public importance which have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

It is not necessary that I should refer particularly to the occurrences connected with the canvass which resulted in my election as delegate to Congress. The events attendant upon that struggle have become a part of the history of our time and of our territory.

While in Detroit, on my way to Washington, I was furnished by General Cass with letters of introduction, couched in warm terms, to some of the leading men in Congress. These were of much service to me; and for the interest manifested by that distinguished gentleman in the welfare of our infant territory, I make this public acknowledgment of deep obligation.

I arrived in Washington two days before Congress convened, and I soon became convinced that my admission as delegate was extremely uncertain; in fact, I may say, abso-

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<sup>1</sup> Inadvertently, on page 134 of this volume, this "Address" is said to have been delivered in person, by Mr. Sibley, to the people of Minnesota, *after* his return from Congress. It was issued from Washington in pamphlet form.—N. W.

lutely improbable. My credentials were presented on the first day of the session by the Hon. James Wilson of New Hampshire, in whose hands they were placed, because he had formerly resided in Iowa, and might be supposed to be better informed, as to our situation and geographical position, than any other member. Although the case was by him set forth in a clear and strong light, an objection was raised to my admission, and my claim was referred to the Committee on Elections, with instructions to examine and report thereon. I will not enter into a detail of the mortifications and vexatious delays to which I was subjected from that time until the question was decided, six weeks after. Although permitted, through courtesy, to occupy a seat in the house, I was allowed none of the privileges of a delegate, and, indeed, I was little more than a lobby member. Meanwhile my claim was resisted with bitter pertinacity by certain individuals of the committee, particularly by the Hon. Mr. Boyden of North Carolina, who made a long and labored argument against my right to a seat, and ridiculed the pretension that a territorial organization still existed in the country north and west of the State of Wisconsin. I made a reply before the committee, the substance of which has been published. You can judge whether your rights were therein properly sustained and defended. Finally, the majority of the committee reported in my favor, and the minority presented a strong counter protest. On the fifteenth, January, the subject was brought before the house, and the resolution introduced by the majority of the committee was adopted by a strong vote, which admitted me to the full enjoyment of the privileges of a delegate. I should have mentioned that my argument in answer to the speech of Mr. Boyden was made the basis of the report of the Committee on Elections, a copy having been furnished by me to the chairman at his request.

Notwithstanding the decision of the house of representatives, which recognized me as the representative of Wisconsin Territory, it was publicly stated by many members who had voted for my reception, that they did not intend thereby to admit the existence of an organization there, but had been actuated merely by motives of courtesy. This fact was made evident but a few days subsequently, when one of my opponents, being determined to test the question, moved to add an item to the general appropriation bill for defraying the expenses of Wisconsin Territory for the ensuing year, which



motion was negatived by a large majority. The house was then taunted with having admitted a delegate to represent a territory which had in reality no legal existence.

The great object to which I turned my attention was the bill for the organization of Minnesota Territory. I was kindly allowed, by the Committee on Territories of the senate, to change certain provisions of the bill so as to meet the wishes of my constituents, and but little difficulty was experienced in procuring its passage by that body. But with the house the case was far different. The bill there was most violently opposed. The Committee on Territories had reported amendments to the senate bill, changing the boundary of Minnesota, and making the act to take effect on the tenth of March, instead of the day of its passage, so as to preclude the administration of Mr. Polk from making the appointments. I was averse to these changes, because we had already sufficient territory without extending our boundary to the Missouri river; and as to the appointments, I stated that Mr. Polk would only exercise the right to nominate two or three of the officers, and that under any circumstances the proposed amendment was to my view a breach of delicacy and propriety, but in both points I was overruled.

An effort was made, in committee, to append the Wilmot proviso to the territorial bill, but this I resisted, as I determined, so far as it was in my power, not to allow it to be clogged by a provision wholly superfluous, as the introduction of slavery was prohibited on the east of the Mississippi by the ordinance of 1787, and on the west of that river by the act of 1819 establishing the Missouri line. The proposition was therefore voted down before the bill was reported to the house, but was brought in as an amendment by the minority of the committee, and was only kept from being adopted, and producing consequently a fierce and angry discussion, which would have resulted in the loss of the bill, by my moving and refusing to withdraw the previous question, which cut off all amendments. On the twenty-second of February, I moved that the rules of the house be suspended to enable me to submit a motion, that the committee of the whole be discharged from the further consideration of the bill for the organization of Minnesota Territory, so as to put it upon its passage. The rules were suspended by a vote of 100 to 16, and the struggle then commenced upon my moving the previous question. I

turned a deaf ear to all entreaties to withdraw it, and I thereby incurred the ire of those who were inimical to the bill. But after an attempt to lay it on the table, or in other words, to defeat it, which was unsuccessful, it was finally ordered to a third reading, and all opposition to it ceased. It was finally passed on the second of March, and sent to the senate, which body refused to concur in the house amendment, changing the date when the bill was to take effect. By great exertion on the part of my friends and myself, the house was at length persuaded to recede from its amendment, and the bill was passed and became a law on the third of March. As Mr. Polk, with great magnanimity, refused to make the appointments, although he had a perfect right so to do, I waited on General Taylor and the secretary of state two days after the inauguration, and submitted a written appeal, that the territory should be allowed the three offices, of secretary, district attorney, and marshal, if no others, and that the remainder should be filled by selections from the Northwest. The effect of the step you have seen. Of the three citizens of our territory named by me in connection with these offices, two only have been appointed, and it was only by incessant efforts on my part that even these were allowed us. I believe it to be a piece of injustice toward us, and a violation of usage, not to have given us the office of secretary also. But the crowds of office-seekers must be conciliated, if possible, and at our cost, so far as the territory could furnish the means. I have no doubt the selections of the individuals appointed to office in our territory are proper ones; but I contended for the principle, that when the materials could be found in the country for filling the offices, the territory should be preferred.

I should be wanting in my duty, did I not place before you the names of the Hon. Messrs. Caleb B. Smith, Robert Smith, Thompson, Darling, Lynde, Turner, Lincoln, Sawyer, Stephens, McLane, Newell, Van Dyke, Venable, and Wilson, as prominent among those members of the house who sustained our interests on every occasion. We owe to them a debt of gratitude for their exertions in our behalf, and we are also under particular obligations to Hon. Messrs. Henry and A. C. Dodge, Walker, Jones, and Douglas of the senate, for their kind sympathies, which were manifested, not in idle words, but by a firm advocacy of all those measures which involved the interests of Minnesota.

The removal of the land office to Stillwater was only effected after much delay and difficulty, as a remonstrance had been made by the members of the Wisconsin legislature, and sent to Senator Walker, against its being removed out of the limits of the state. This obstacle was eventually surmounted by the establishment of an additional land district in Wisconsin, the location of which office has been made at Willow River. A weekly mail has been granted us by the postmaster general, at my earnest and repeated solicitation. I was aided in obtaining this grant by the gentlemen composing the Iowa and Wisconsin delegations.

I offered a resolution in the house, which was adopted, to instruct the Committee on the Post Office to inquire into the expediency of establishing a post route from Fort Snelling to Fort Gaines, also to instruct the Committee on Indian Affairs to inquire into the expediency of extending the laws of the United States over the Northwest tribes, so as to make all amenable to the proper tribunals, and thereby put a stop to the murders and other crimes habitually perpetrated among them. I also drew up a bill which was presented in the senate by Hon. George W. Jones, and in the house by Hon. Robert Smith, appropriating \$12,000 for the construction of a road from the St. Louis river of Lake Superior, to St. Paul and to Point Douglas via the Marine Mills and Stillwater. There was not sufficient time to push these measures through Congress at this short session; but they will doubtless be effected next winter, as I do not apprehend any difficulty will be thrown in the way of their passage. Much business appertaining to individuals and to private claims has also been intrusted to me, and I have given it as great a share of my attention as other and more important duties would permit.

Having been furnished with a power of attorney, signed by a large number of Sioux mixed-bloods, to dispose of their lands at Lake Pepin, I waited upon the secretary of war and commissioner of Indian affairs repeatedly, with a hope of procuring their concurrence in the furtherance of this object. It was finally decided by the former, that as a change of administration was so soon to take place, it would not be proper for him to enter into any negotiations with me; and he likewise objected, that as many of the signatures were in the same handwriting, and only witnessed by two persons, that the letter of attorney would not be considered valid in law. I then

made the attempt to procure an item to be appended to the general appropriation bill, for a sufficient sum to defray the expenses of making a treaty with the owners of the Lake Pepin tract, and for negotiating a general treaty with the Sioux Indians; also for \$2,500 to pay the expenses of a general treaty of pacification between the Sioux, Chippewa, and Winnebago tribes; but the bill was so far advanced that the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means refused to recommend these measures, and I knew it would be useless to press them in opposition to him.

The petitions of those individuals who had suffered by being driven from their places of residence on the military reserve, as also those who had lost a part or all of the amount allowed them under the Sioux treaty of 1837, were presented and referred to the proper committees for examination; but they were received too late in the season to be acted on at the session just closed. There is no doubt of the justice of the claims of all these persons, and I trust and believe, that if properly represented and pressed, they will be met in a spirit of liberality by Congress at its next meeting.

I have thus, fellow citizens, glanced at those measures of importance to Minnesota and its people, which have been attempted or accomplished. It remains for me now only to state a few facts and make a few suggestions, which are intimately connected with the subject. In the first place, I assert as a proposition, which cannot be contradicted, that your delegate would not have been admitted to a seat if he had appeared here as elected by a party, and that his defeat would have involved the failure of the Minnesota bill, and necessarily of other important projects which were committed solely to his care. I do not make this declaration in any spirit of self-congratulation or conceit. There are others among you who, with the same advantages and the same means, would have performed as much as I have done. But I refer to the fact to illustrate the wisdom of your determination to draw no party lines at the late election. Chosen by the people without regard to the distinctions of Whig or Democrat, my course here has been shaped in exact accordance with that determination. My rule was to keep *my ears open and my mouth shut*, whenever questions were discussed of a party character, or other matters not appertaining in any way to my own region of country. The contemptible attack upon me which appeared

in the *Union*, was happily attended with no effect whatever, but was regarded as the malignant effusion of a personal enemy, or of one inimical to the interests of those who sent me here. It was only considered surprising by Democrats and Whigs, that anyone could be found in the territory sufficiently malevolent, to resort to these means, which might have been attended with serious injury to your interests, in the then critical state of my case, to accomplish some unknown purpose. To show how little it was regarded, I will merely mention that the article appeared in the *Union* only two days before the vote was taken by which I was received as delegate; and you are doubtless aware, that at least one-half of those who supported me were Democrats. Immediately after the publication of the communication referred to, I called at the office of the *Union* to ascertain by what authority it had been inserted, and Mr. Ritchie expressed his regret that any misstatement had been made, and very handsomely offered me the columns of his paper to make necessary corrections. Upon the advice of my friends, I determined that the article should receive no further notice at my hands.

You are all aware that I appeared before the people as a candidate opposed to drawing party lines. I believed then, and I believe now, that no such distinctions should be made in a territory, the delegate of which has no vote, and whose policy is to make himself popular with all parties. When the time comes, be it sooner or later, that we shall have a population sufficient to justify us in looking forward to our admission into the Union at an early day, then, in my view, will be the proper period to mould the political complexion of the state. My own opinions on all points of national policy are as distinct and well defined as those of any other man. But never having resided within the limits of a state for any length of time, I have not been called upon to take part in political contests. I do not assume to direct your views on this subject, nor to dictate what course you should pursue. I only state my own opinions, based upon observation and experience. You will soon be called upon to choose a delegate to represent the interests of Minnesota Territory in the Congress of the United States. Whether or not I shall be a candidate, depends upon the value which will be attached to my labors hitherto, and certain other contingencies. I do not pretend to conceal, however, that there is a strong probability that I

may present myself before you as such, and seek to be re-elected. It is for the people to decide in their primary assemblies, whether they will maintain the position they have hitherto assumed, or whether they will divide on the point of national politics. In either case, it will be for me to acquiesce in the determination; but until party lines are drawn, I shall continue to occupy the same neutral ground I have heretofore contended for, until your fiat has gone forth that it must be abandoned, and that your public men must thenceforth be tried by a party test; when, should I conclude to allow my name to appear before you in connection with the high station of delegate, I shall make a declaration of my political sentiments. Whoever may be selected to fill that office will find himself very differently situated from the delegate who represented the unrecognized Territory of Wisconsin. He will not have to struggle for admission to the house of representatives, nor be told that he owes his seat only to the courtesy of that body.

Minnesota now occupies no unenviable position. The government granted us secures us all in the full possession of privileges almost if not fully equal to those enjoyed by the people of the states. With a legislative council, elected from among our own citizens, our own judicial tribunals, with a large appropriation for the construction of public buildings, and for a public library, with ample provision for defraying the expenses of the territorial government, and with the right of representation in the halls of Congress, surely we can have no cause of complaint so far as our political situation is concerned. It is for ourselves, by a wise, careful, and practical legislation, and by improving the advantages we possess, to keep inviolate the public faith, and to hasten the time when the star of Minnesota, which now but twinkles in the political firmament, shall shine brilliantly in the constellation of our confederated states.

Fellow citizens, my task is finished; and while you have my heartfelt thanks for the honor bestowed upon me in electing me your delegate, I now give back the trust, with a full consciousness that I have allowed no selfish feeling to interfere with my public duties; but that, on the contrary, I have labored constantly, zealously, and faithfully, with the poor talents God has bestowed upon me, in advancing all the great and important interests of our common country.

## SECOND ADDRESS

OF

HON. HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY OF MINNESOTA  
TERRITORY,

TO THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA TERRITORY. ISSUED FROM  
WASHINGTON, JULY 29, 1850, BEFORE CLOSE OF  
FIRST SESSION, THIRTY-FIRST CONGRESS.

(See pp. 177, 178.)

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FELLOW CITIZENS: The day being at hand which has been fixed by law for the choice of a delegate to represent you in the next Congress, I have adopted this method of announcing myself to you as a candidate for re-election. It would have been much more agreeable to me if I had been permitted to do this in person, but it is not probable that I will be able to leave my post for a sufficient length of time to visit you before the first Monday in September, without jeopardizing the success of measures in which the territory is deeply interested. No considerations merely personal to myself can induce me to be absent under such circumstances.

Nearly sixteen years have elapsed since I became a resident of what is now Minnesota. With the exception of the garri-son at Fort Snelling, and a few settlers in the vicinity, and at the different trading posts in the interior, there was then not a single white man within the vast area of country embraced at present in the limits of our territory. All was one vast solitude, beautiful indeed in its pristine loveliness, but without any traces of the handiwork of civilized man. In the course of time the influx of population commenced, and continued, but at a slow rate, until the admission of Wisconsin as a state, and the organization at the subsequent session of Minnesota Territory. The scene has changed, and that very suddenly, since the latter measure was secured. That organization has infused new energy and vitality into a region which had suffered for months from the withdrawal on the part of the general government of the blessings and protection of law



which had previously been enjoyed. Let us take a retrospective glance at the different movements which led the way to so momentous a result. The first of these was the Stillwater convention, which assembled in pursuance of a call made on the fourth day of August, 1848, by eighteen citizens, myself being one of that number. The convention was composed of sixty-one delegates, representing nearly all the inhabited portions of the territory, and their action in memorializing Congress, and in stimulating the public mind to the necessity of the immediate establishment of a territorial government, may be regarded as the moving spring of a series of measures, which were destined to bring about that desirable end. I was appointed by that convention as a delegate or agent to visit Washington during the session of Congress, and use every proper effort to accomplish the object, which we all deemed to be of such paramount importance. I accepted the commission, stating to the convention at the same time, that I should accept of no remuneration from the people, either for loss of time, or for my personal expenses.

But a short period had elapsed, however, before acting Governor Catlin, being satisfied of the propriety of the step, by the letters of Hon. James Buchanan and others, and being urged by some of our citizens to do so, issued his proclamation for the election of a delegate to Congress, to represent the residuum of Wisconsin Territory. The proceedings of the convention in my case were confirmed, and I was elected by the people. The obstacles which were thrown in the way of my obtaining a seat, and the desperate exertions necessary after I was admitted, to secure the passage by Congress of an act to establish the territorial government of Minnesota, are part and parcel of the history of the times, and must be familiar to most of you. Suffice it to say, that those exertions, aided by friendly influences in and out of Congress, were successful, and Minnesota became an organized territory of the republic. The tidings of the passage of this act were received by the people with acclamation, and at the subsequent election I was returned as the delegate to Congress without opposition. Such is a succinct, but correct, account of the transactions connected with our entrance upon a territorial state. The results are already visible in the flourishing condition of affairs among us, in the increase of immigration, and our prospective speedy advancement to the rank of an independent state of the Confederacy.

At the close of the session of Congress, and before my return to the territory, I issued an address to my constituents, recapitulating what had been effected, and counseling them, so far as it was proper and respectful for me to do so, not to permit party politics to enter into their elections, but averring, at the same time, my determination to make public my own political sentiments, so soon as I should become satisfied that it was the intention of the people to draw party lines. Subsequently, in the month of October, a Democratic convention was held at St. Paul, a committee of which made a call upon me, which elicited, on my part, what has been designated as the "American House Letter," about which so much has been said. I therein stated, that although I had previously opposed the mingling of party considerations with our elections, I was convinced that the lines were already virtually drawn, and in accordance, therefore, with my previous public declaration, I felt at liberty to make my own sentiments known, which were those of a Democrat of the Jeffersonian school, but I distinctly asserted at the same time, that, having been elected by the united votes of Whigs and Democrats, in no event would I depart from a course of strict neutrality in the discharge of my public duties here. No man can justly charge me with a deviation from that line of conduct, nor can I be induced to swerve from it during my remaining term of service.

It is evident I was in error in supposing that the people of the territory generally were in favor of a party organization, and that such a step could no longer be avoided. And I am not prepared to say that the postponement of a division on political grounds is not the most prudent course that can be pursued, for the present at least, in our territory. When our population shall have sufficiently increased to justify us in the belief that the day for the admission of Minnesota into the Union is not far distant, it will be the incumbent duty of every man within it, so to endeavor to form its political complexion as to him may seem best calculated to insure "the greatest good to the greatest number." Until that period arrives, leave your delegate at least free to act, without being trammelled by any imposed obligation, to take part in the political contests at the seat of government. My own experience has so far convinced me of the propriety of non-interference in these topics of discussion here, that should I even be elected by a

strict party vote to that station, a conscientious regard for the interests of the territory would constrain me to pursue the same line of policy which I have hitherto adopted. In no other way can a delegate make himself useful to his constituents, or accomplish those beneficial results for the territory, which they have a right to expect at his hands.

I need hardly inform you, fellow citizens, that for obvious reasons there has been greater difficulty in procuring the assent of Congress to any measures of practical legislation during the present session, than has probably ever been the case since the foundation of the government. Nearly eight months have been consumed in debate on topics more or less connected with the institution of slavery, to the exclusion of other great and important interests of the country. Every other subject of national concern has been overlooked and neglected by Congress, and up to this time there seems to be no more ground to hope for the adjustment or settlement of the sectional controversy which now agitates the land than at the commencement of the session. It could not reasonably be expected, under such circumstances, that Minnesota would receive much attention at the hands of that body. It should be a subject of congratulation, therefore, that we have not been thus neglected. Of the very few acts passed, and sanctioned by the president, three of them have been for our especial benefit. I refer to the bills for the erection of public buildings, and a prison, for roads, and to authorize the legislative assembly to prolong its next session to ninety days. By the two former, we are secured the sum of \$80,000, to be expended during the current year. The sums allowed for the construction of roads between important and distant points in our territory, although, perhaps, not sufficient to complete them, will go far toward opening the country to immigrants, and will prove of incalculable benefit, even on that score alone. And we may reasonably rely upon the liberality of Congress to supply any deficiency hereafter, which may operate to prevent the immediate completion of these great thoroughfares.

The estimates for the expenses of the territorial government for this year, including the increase requisite to meet the prolonged session, will amount to about \$35,000, and are provided for in the general civil and diplomatic appropriation bill, which will undoubtedly be passed within the next twenty days. To these amounts are to be added the sum appropri-

ated to meet the deficiencies in the territorial expenditures of last year, amounting to about \$13,000, the most part of which was got through in the face of an existing law of Congress prohibiting the territories from exceeding the appropriations made to defray the expenses of their respective governments. Thus far, then, we have secured to us for disbursement among our citizens during this year, more than one-eighth of a million of dollars in cash, which is more than any other territory has ever received in a single year.

But this is not all that has been accomplished. The river and harbor bill, which has been reported to the house by the Committee on Commerce, contains an item of \$5,000 for the survey of the Mississippi river above the Falls of St. Anthony, preparatory to its improvement. Congress has enriched our library, by the gift of a copy of the complete works of the exploring expedition, valued at eight hundred or a thousand dollars. The appropriations for treaties with the Sioux Indians, and to extinguish the Indian title to a considerable portion of the valley of the Red River of the North, have been placed in proper train, and will be speedily acted on. The senate has passed the bill "for the benefit of Minnesota," which, should it succeed in the house, will grant us quite three millions of acres of the public lands for the construction of a railroad from our extreme western boundary, by the way of Lake Traverse and the valley of the Minnesota river, to the Iowa line, with a sure prospect of a further grant at the next session, for a connecting branch to the seat of government. The bill for the reduction of the military reserve at Fort Snelling has been retarded in the senate by opposition from the war department, and from other sources, but I have strong reasons to believe it will, nevertheless, become a law during the present session. The half-breed treaty, which has been to me the cause of much anxiety, and in behalf of which I have spared no exertion, still remains unacted on in the senate, and may possibly be defeated, because of the undue and malignant influences which have been brought to bear upon it from the territory, inducing senators to look upon it with a suspicious and unfavorable eye. The bills for post routes, and a collection district in Minnesota, will doubtless also be passed.

Besides these measures which I have enumerated, and which have required my unremitting attention, much business

has been transacted with the different departments of the government, as well for the territory as for private citizens. Mail facilities have been multiplied, and post offices established through my instrumentality. Several of the thirty-sixth sections of school lands have been secured, of which the decision of the commissioner of the land office would have deprived us, had I not prosecuted a successful appeal from that decision to the secretary of the interior. Many claims of our citizens upon the government have been pressed, for the most part with success, and no individual can complain of neglect on my part, who has intrusted his affairs to my hands. I have, withal, maintained a correspondence with all parts of the country in reference to Minnesota and its advantages, information being naturally sought from me, by persons desirous to emigrate, and cheerfully afforded.

I have thus endeavored to bring to your notice, fellow citizens, but in an imperfect and hasty manner, the field of labor which has occupied your delegate, for the most part, day and night, since the commencement of the session. You can thereby judge, to some extent at least, of the obstacles to be surmounted, in accomplishing what has been done. If anyone imagines that these results have been brought about without personal solicitation, constant and unwearied, and the cultivation of kind relations with members of both houses of Congress, and the heads of departments and bureaus, as well as the most arduous continuity of exertion, he is much deceived in his estimate of what is necessary to the satisfactory consummation here, of business appertaining either to the territory or to individuals. I have been a working man thus far through life, but never have I been called upon to undergo labor so incessant and so exhausting, as during this and the preceding session of Congress.

It will naturally be asked, why, if such be the case, I have any desire to return here as the delegate, after the expiration of my present term of service. I have two reasons to assign why I have consented again to go before the people as a candidate for re-election. The first is, that many of my friends, irrespective of party, have urged me to do so; and the second is my entire conviction, that one or more of those who have been announced as probable candidates for the station I now hold, seek to be elected, not for the advancement of the territory and its interests, but to subserve private ends and sel-

fish purposes. I have toiled too long and too faithfully for Minnesota, to be willing to see its destinies committed to such hands, if by any sacrifice of my own inclination or comfort, I can avert from it such an evil.

Being necessarily absent during the canvass, fellow citizens, I must expect to be assailed by every device and every weapon which my enemies can bring to bear against me. Some of the gentlemen who are reported as among the candidates, will not, I feel assured, descend to detraction or abuse to endeavor to bring about my defeat. From others who are also announced as aspirants to the same office, I may not expect, nor do I ask, forbearance. They commenced their system of tactics at the very beginning of the session, by endeavoring at that early period, to induce the people of Minnesota to believe that I had lost my influence here. I am willing to be judged on this point by results, which, after all, is the only criterion whereby to form a correct impression as to the standing of a representative. It will be charged, also, that I am connected with a firm which is a monopoly. If to be a monopolist is never to make use of any means to crush an opponent, or to work injury to any man, then am I one. If it is in the nature of a monopolist to assist the poor man in securing his homestead, by lending the money necessary for him to do so, at never more than a legal rate of interest, when he would cheerfully have paid twenty per cent per annum, then must I plead guilty to the charge, for I have been such a monopolist in many cases, so far as my means would allow. I appeal to the old settlers, who have known me for years, to say whether I have ever oppressed a human being, or taken advantage of his necessities to deal harshly by him.

I do not anticipate that the most virulent of my opponents will attempt any imputation upon my private character, or even insinuate that I have used my public position for personal objects of my own, or for any other purpose than the general interests of the territory.

Fellow citizens, if I have seemed unduly to parade before you the services I have rendered, I trust you will not attribute my having done so to an exaggerated estimate of my own merits, or a desire to impress you with an idea that what has been accomplished has been owing *solely* to my own exertions. On the contrary, I have been aided by kind and confiding friends in and out of Congress, and it gives me pleasure here

to acknowledge the obligations I am under to the Hon. Messrs. Douglas, Dodge of Wisconsin, Dodge of Iowa, Cooper, Underwood, Foote, Shields, Seward, Walker, and others, of the senate, and to many gentlemen of both political parties in the house of representatives, for the friendly assistance rendered me in promoting the interests of our territory. His Excellency, Governor Ramsey, has also rendered me essential support, by his correspondence with leading men here; and I am happy likewise, to render to Hugh Tyler, Esq., of our territory, the tribute due for his efficient co-operation in urging forward all measures of importance to its welfare. What I do claim for myself is, to have devoted my whole time and most strenuous efforts to the discharge of my public duty.

Finally, fellow citizens, I offer myself as a candidate for your suffrages at the approaching election, without distinction of party, hereby pledging myself, if elected, to maintain, during my term of service, the same neutral position in the discharge of my duties as a delegate, that I have hitherto preserved, and to labor for the *general* good of Minnesota with the same zeal and diligence which have thus far characterized my course. More than this, I can neither promise nor perform.

Your Fellow Citizen,

HENRY H. SIBLEY.

. WASHINGTON CITY, July 29, 1850.



II.

OFFICIAL MILITARY REPORTS AND DISPATCHES  
OF  
COLONEL HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY.

FIRST SIOUX CAMPAIGN,

1862.

(See pp. 258-283.)

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[This second part of the appendix contains military reports and dispatches of Colonel Sibley, during the first Sioux campaign, and covering the period from September 1, 1862, to October 21, 1862.]

HEADQUARTERS, September 1, 1862.

*Adjutant General O. Malmros, St. Paul,*

SIR: The ammunition and rations have just arrived, and although the supply is small, I shall march to-morrow and probably cross the Minnesota at the Yellow Medicine and follow the main body of the Indians in whatever direction they have gone. There are still small parties lurking about here, but I do not think that the Indians are in force this side of the river. I have had parties out as far as the Yellow Medicine. They saw nothing, but heard a few shots fired in the vicinity, or rather up the Yellow Medicine river.

I sent out a company of mounted men and one of infantry, yesterday, with a burial party. They are still out, and up to last evening they had interred forty-one (41) bodies, mostly those of men, including probably those under Captain Marsh's command who were killed at the ferry.

The mounted men have to-day crossed to the Lower Agency to examine matters there, while the infantry proceed up on this side of the river, to examine the country thoroughly. The dead were so much decomposed as to render recognition impossible.

I trust more cartridges will soon arrive, for with all we have, the men will be furnished with less than forty (40) rounds each, much too small a number for an extended expedition into the Indian country. We have no means of baking the flour, which is very annoying. Hard bread should, by all means, be sent. I have already pressed upon you the necessity of having forwarded, as expeditiously as possible, clothing, blankets, etc.

I have dispatched orders to Captain Rogers of the Seventh, to report at New Ulm and be directed by Captain Flandrau. Captain Davis' company is also there, and Captain Edgerton's company is at the Winnebago Agency. I have advices from the latter up to yesterday, in which he informs me that all was quiet at the agency.

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Colonel, Commanding Indian Expedition.*

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## BATTLE OF BIRCH COOLIE, AUGUST 31, 1862.

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### HEADQUARTERS INDIAN EXPEDITION,

September 4, 1862.

*Adjutant General O. Malmros, St. Paul,*

SIR: I have received two several dispatches from Governor Ramsey of first instant, one of which regards the disposition of some of the forces under my command, which I will endeavor to comply with so far as I deem it prudent to do so. In fact, the region at New Ulm and its vicinity is already in possession of Captain Davis' and Captain Rogers' companies, which I dispatched there, to aid Captain Flandrau in the defense of the line, and I will co-operate with them from this side so far as it is possible to do so. I will dismiss the allusion to a possible treaty or negotiation with the miserable wretches who have murdered our people and devastated our frontier by stating that neither suggestion, nor idea nor supposition of any such arrangement has ever been made or conceived, so far as I know, by any man in this camp. The absurd rumors spread by the men, who in most cases basely deserted this corps as it was about to encounter the enemy, were, at least so far as any treaty ar-

rangements was conceived, without a shadow of foundation in fact. I wish this assertion to be taken as absolute and without foundation.

I have to report the particulars of a sad affair, which has been attended with extraordinary fatality to a portion of my command, on Thursday, thirty-first ultimo. After having previously taken measures by sending through as far as the Yellow Medicine scouts entirely reliable to ascertain whether the country was free from Indians, and none having been seen, nor any trace of them found, I dispatched Captain Grant, with his company of seventy-five men of the Sixth regiment, fifty-five men of the mounted volunteer force under the command of Captain Joseph Anderson, and an armed burial party of twenty men, in all about one hundred and fifty-three men, the whole under the command of Major J. R. Brown, with orders to proceed to the scene of the late butcheries, collect and inter the remains, and search for any survivors that might perchance be roaming through the country. The further orders given to Major J. R. Brown were to avoid any pass or defile where they might be waylaid or ambushed, to use every precaution against Indian treachery, and after having performed the duties devolved upon him to rejoin my forces either here or at Birch Coolie, about eighteen miles from here, whither I expected to move on the succeeding day. On the day succeeding their departure I heard from them through Mr. Myrick and others, who informed me that they were proceeding actively in the interment of the dead bodies, having already disposed of sixty-nine in all. On the morning of the second, I was startled by the reports of volleys of musketry in the distance, in the direction where the detachment was supposed to be. I immediately dispatched Major McLaren, with three companies of the Sixth regiment, a detachment of mounted men, and two pieces of artillery, to the relief of Major Brown, the whole being under the command of Colonel McPhail, with orders to proceed at once to the camp of Major Brown, wherever he might be found. I received a message from Colonel McPhail in the evening, stating that he had not been able to join Major Brown, but was then nearly surrounded, with his command, by the Indians, who were giving indications of hostilities. I immediately placed the remainder of my forces under arms and marched to their rescue. I joined them during the night,

and early in the morning, with the force thus united, I proceeded toward the spot, some miles distant, where the continuous rattle of musketry showed the camp of Major Brown to be. As I crossed the prairie toward the timber, the Indians deployed as skirmishers to resist my advance, but, having protected my flank from attack, I deployed my advance guard of three companies and advanced. A brisk firing at long range ensued on both sides, but with no loss to us, and but the loss of one man to the Indians, killed or wounded. As I marched they commenced a general retreat along their line, and I reached the camp of Major Brown, to find the shocking sight of dead and wounded men and dead and struggling horses strewn through the camp. The attack commenced on Major Brown's camp, at daylight, by about two hundred and fifty Indians, on the morning of the second. Our loss was thirteen killed and three mortally wounded, and forty-four more or less seriously injured, including Major Brown and Captain Anderson, the latter having received two wounds. I proceeded to inter the dead—thirteen in number—and to remove the wounded men to this post for surgical care. I arrived here with my whole force at midnight last night, and shall remain no longer than is necessary to completely organize and equip the expedition to pursue the Indians. The unfortunate issue of the movement referred to has added another to the list of crimes committed by this league of fiends. I will send you Major Brown's detailed report of the affair as soon as received.

I have learned, with pain, that much dissatisfaction exists below in consequence of the unavoidable delays in fitting the expedition for field service. I am therefore anxious to relieve your administration of any embarrassment connected with the affair. I hereby place my commission at your disposal, and shall be glad to turn over my command to some person to be selected by the commander-in-chief, in whose military training and experience the people of the state will perhaps feel more confidence.

Yours Respectfully,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Colonel, Commanding Indian Expedition.*

FORT RIDGLEY, September 4, 1862.

*Colonel H. H. Sibley, Commanding Expedition in Sioux Country,*

SIR: In compliance with your order, I left the encampment at this post, on the morning of August 31, 1862, to visit the different settlements between this post and Beaver river, to search for and bury all persons that could be found murdered, and at the same time, to examine the country about the Lower Sioux Agency and Little Crow's village, to mark all indications of the movement of the Indians, and the course taken by them in their retreat.

Captain Grant's Company A, Sixth regiment; Captain Anderson's company of mounted men, several volunteers from the officers of the expedition, a fatigue party of twenty men, and seventeen teamsters, with their teams, formed the force of the detachment.

On the thirty-first of August, the detachment moved in a body and encamped on the Minnesota bottom, at the mouth of Birch Coolie and opposite the Lower Sioux Agency, having found and buried sixteen corpses during the day.

On the first of September, the detachment marched in a body to the river bank, when the mounted company, with one team and eight of the fatigue party, accompanied me across the river, under the protection of the infantry. After searching around the agency, and becoming satisfied there were no Indians in the vicinity, Captain Grant was directed to remain with his company, and twelve of the fatigue party, and sixteen teams on the east side of the river, to bury what murdered persons could be found at the crossing and at the settlements, as far as Beaver river, and from the Beaver river to return to the upper timber on the Birch Coolie, and encamp.

I proceeded with that portion of the detachment that had crossed the river, to bury the dead about the agency, and then proceeded to Little Crow's village, and from there I went alone to where the road leading to the Coteau de Prairie diverges from the Yellow Medicine road, to ascertain whether the Indians had gone to the coteau, or continued up the Minnesota, toward the Yellow Medicine.

The road and the camps about Little Crow's village indicated that the main body of the Indians had an immense baggage train, which had gone forward about six days previous,

and a smaller baggage train, coming from the lower part of the reservation, had gone forward two days subsequently, the entire force keeping the Yellow Medicine road.

In all our examinations, no signs could be found about the village, along the road, or at the river crossing, near the village, that any Indians had been in the vicinity for the four days previous. This was the united opinion of Major Galbraith, Messrs. Alex. Faribault, Geo. Faribault, and J. J. Frazier (who were among the volunteers), and myself; and, as the Indians, when encamped near their villages, invariably visit them frequently, the general supposition was, that upon learning the approach of troops, the Lower Indians had gone up to join the Yellow Medicine Indians, that they might subsequently act in concert in their defense against the troops, or in their movement west.

Having accomplished the object of my visit to Little Crow's village, I proceeded to the ford, near that village, and recrossed the Minnesota river, and, near sunset, reached the encampment selected by Captain Grant, near the upper timber of the Birch Coolie, and about three miles from the Lower Agency.

The two divisions of the detachment buried, during this day, fifty-four murdered persons. Captain Grant found a woman who was still alive, although she had been almost entirely without sustenance for fourteen days, and was severely wounded. She escaped from the massacre at Patterson's Rapids.

This camp was made in the usual way, on the smooth prairie, some two hundred yards from the timber of Birch Coolie, with the wagons packed around the camp, and the team horses fastened to the wagons. The horses belonging to the mounted men were fastened to a stout picket rope, between the tents and wagons, around the south half of the camp—Captain Anderson's tents being behind his horses, and Captain Grant's tents being inside the wagons which formed the north half of the camp.

A guard of thirty men and two non-commissioned officers was detailed and organized—ten sentinels being stationed about thirty yards from the wagons, at intervals, around the camp, with instructions to keep a good lookout, and report any noise or other indications of the approach of Indians.

Nothing was reported from the guard, until half past four

o'clock, on the morning of September 2d, when one of the guard called out, "Indians!" and almost instantly afterward a shower of balls fell upon the camp. The firing, for probably a minute, was entirely on the part of the Indians, during which time many of our men were either killed or wounded; but the mortality among the men, at that time, was, by no means, as severe as might be supposed, owing to the protection afforded by the horses.

Captain Anderson and his company promptly availed themselves of the protection afforded by the wagons near him, and opened fire upon the Indians.

Captain Grant's company and the fatigue party promptly seized their arms, and commenced firing; but they, for some minutes, continued to expose themselves, imprudently, and consequently were very much cut to pieces. After the entire detachment became settled under the shelter of the wagons and dead horses, but few were killed or wounded, and the close firing on our side soon caused the Indians to withdraw to the shelter of the woods.

After the withdrawal of the Indians, the construction of rifle-pits was commenced in different parts of the camp, which, although the men worked with a will, progressed slowly, owing to the hardness of the soil, and the want of proper tools. Three spades, one pick, bayonets, tin pans, etc., constituted our means for excavation; and yet rifle-pits to the extent of about two hundred feet in length were completed. From the time the first rifle-pit was commenced, but one man was killed and two wounded, although the fire of the Indians was continued until the arrival of reinforcements.

Although the Indians had great advantages over us in the early part of the engagement, I think that the mortality on our side, fearful as it was, did not exceed that of the Indians, judging by the numbers they carried across the prairie from the timber from which they fired. Our men were cool, and had orders to discharge their pieces only when a prospect of hitting a foe was presented.

About two o'clock, on the second of September, the report of a cannon, which we were confident was discharged by friends approaching to our relief, was hailed with joy, and as we were then in a condition to laugh at all the attacks of Indians upon our position, we felt confident that they would be cheated of a victory through starvation or thirst.



As the reinforcements advanced, the Indians began to withdraw from us, and prepare for operations against the approaching force. We could see and hear the Indians, and learned through them that the force was not large, and they hoped to cut it off. This gave us some uneasiness, because we feared the troops might attempt to cross the Birch Coolie about dark; but we soon learned they were halted, and that the Indians proposed to wait until morning to make an attack upon them. In the morning of September 3d, we again observed the maneuvers of the Indians, and could plainly hear their lamentations at the discovery that you with your entire force had reached Col. McPhail's camp during the night. From that time, the Indians had no hopes of either capturing us or defeating the reinforcements. Still they kept up a fire on us until your van reached within two or three hundred yards of us.

The Indian force which attacked our camp I estimate at from two hundred and fifty to three hundred, all well armed and many mounted on good horses.

Inclosed you will find Captain Anderson's report, detailing the force, operations, and casualties of his company. His officers and men (with the exceptions he indicates) acted with the utmost coolness and courage. The captain, although twice severely wounded, continued in active command of his company until your reinforcements reached our camp. To the prompt movements and energetic action of himself, and his officers and men, the early retreat of the Indians from the prairie is in a great measure due.

Captain Grant rendered important service in the construction of the main line of rifle-pits. Lieutenant Gillam of Captain Grant's company, with a small party, located themselves on the left of Captain Anderson early in the fight, and did gallant service. Lieutenant Baldwin of the same company also acted with cool courage in the different portions of the camp where his duties called him. Lieutenant Swan of the Third infantry (a volunteer) was in charge of a party near and on the left of Lieutenant Gillam, where he and his party did good service. Mr. Alex. Faribault, with his son, J. Frazier, and other volunteers, had position on the north portion of the camp, where good service was done during the continuance of the battle. Major Galbraith and Captain Redfield, both volunteers, were wounded early in the morning. Major Gal-

braith received two wounds, but continued to assist in the construction of the rifle-pits. Lieutenant Patch (volunteer) and Sergeant Pratt of Captain Grant's company, also rendered valuable service in the defense of the western rifle-pit.

There were wounded, of the volunteers, in addition to those mentioned above, Daniel Blair and Warren DeCamp, the latter very severely. Mr. J. C. Dickenson of Henderson, and R. Henderson of Beaver river, also volunteers, left the camp in company with four others at the first fire, and were probably killed. The body of Mr. Henderson was found a short distance from the camp.

Having received no report from Captain Grant, I am unable to give the names of the killed and wounded of his company, and the fatigue party attached to it.

There were a few men who behaved badly, mostly, I think, teamsters; but with these exceptions, the entire detachment acted with commendable coolness and courage. Probably the desire of Captain Grant's company to charge upon the Indians led to their exposure, consequently so many deaths and wounds. After they took position behind the wagons but few casualties occurred.

It is a singular fact, that the woman found by Captain Grant escaped unhurt, although she lay in a high wagon, exposed to the fire of the Indians, and which had several balls pass through it. The killed and wounded were reported to Van on the third instant, by Dr. Daniels, who accompanied the detachment. That report I believe to be correct.

Every horse belonging to the detachment was killed, excepting six, which were left at the camp, being wounded and unable to travel.

The tents belonging to the detachment were perfectly riddled, one having one hundred and forty ball holes through it. They are unfit for service. Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JOSEPH R. BROWN,

*Major Third Minnesota Volunteer Militia, Commanding Detachment.*

HEADQUARTERS IN CAMP,  
NEAR FORT RIDGLEY, September 5, 1862.

*Adjutant General O. Malmros, St. Paul,*

SIR: \* \* \* I am very anxious to secure the safety of the many prisoners before attacking the camp, as they will doubtless be placed in the most exposed situation. The number of fighting men among the Lower bands is 617, acceding the actual enumeration of Wakpatons about 250, and that they have been reinforced by 600 men from the Yankton and Sisseton bands, and that the Eyanktonas or Cut-Heads will be down as soon as they arrive from their hunt. We have therefore to meet, according to Mr. Riggs and another competent authority, 2,700 or 2,800 men, and I have, from the beginning, believed and acted upon this conviction, that the Lower bands would not attempt to escape, but would make a determined stand. Their main camp is at Yellow Medicine, and it is said by the Robinsons that the Upper Sioux have refused to allow them to go to the country, but tell them that they must fight where they are. From what I can gather, I am satisfied they will make a desperate fight, and that we must expect night attacks, ambushes, and every species of annoyance in our advance. In view of the great importance of the results of the movements of this column, and the fact that I am without any disposable form of mounted men (there are not more than sixty or seventy left), I must urge the absolute necessity of having cavalry fully armed and equipped, to the number at least of one regiment, and the infantry force increased to 2,000 men.

This expedition, if properly supplied with men and materials, can crush this *émeute* at a blow, and wipe out the murderers, but should it meet with repulse, or take the field against a vigilant and desperate enemy without sufficient supplies, no one can see the horrible results.

The scouts, as well as the bearers of the flag of truce, assert that all outlying parties have been called in, in view of the menacing position of our corps, and the latter further state that the party that attacked Major Brown's camp consisted of 349 men, who left the Yellow Medicine with the intention of dividing into two parties at this point, and simultaneously attacking St. Peter and Mankato, and that they had no idea of the force that met and repulsed them being in the neighborhood.

I hope that the Third regiment will be ordered to join this column at once, and that men and cartridges, rations and clothing, will be pressed forward with all expedition. Let us exterminate these vermin while we have them together.

I will report to you in my next the amount and description of ammunition on hand, and what is still wanting.

In accordance with your suggestion, I have sent to New Ulm eighty-three muskets of different kinds and 2,800 cartridges, which have been turned over to the sheriff of the county for arming the settlers.

I learn from Colonel Flandrau that he would leave for St. Paul to hurry up reinforcements and supplies for the south side of the river.

While I concur in his report of the necessity of adding to his strength, I hope that you will not forget that, in all probability, *this corps* must meet the main attack, and that the Third regiment, being disciplined, is indispensable as a nucleus and an example to the entirely raw officers and men composing the large majority of the Sixth and Seventh regiments.

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Colonel, Commanding Military Expedition.*

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## BATTLE OF WOOD LAKE.

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WOOD LAKE, NEAR YELLOW MEDICINE,  
September 23, 1862.

*To His Excellency, Governor Ramsey,*

SIR: I left the camp at Fort Ridgley on the nineteenth instant, with my command, and reached this point early in the afternoon of the twenty-second. There have been small parties of Indians each day in plain sight, evidently acting as scouts for the main body. This morning I had determined to cross the Yellow Medicine river, about three miles distant, and there await the arrival of Captain Rogers' company of the Seventh regiment, which was ordered by me from New Ulm, to join me by a forced march, the presence of the company there being unnecessary by the arrival there of another company, a few days previous.

About seven o'clock this morning the camp was attacked by about three hundred Indians, who suddenly made their appearance and dashed down toward us, whooping and yelling in their usual style, and firing with great rapidity.

The Renville Guards, under Lieutenant Gorman, were sent by me to check them, and Major Welch of the Third regiment was instantly in line with his command, with his skirmishers in the advance, by whom the savages were gallantly met, and after a conflict of a serious nature, repulsed.

Meanwhile another portion of the Indian force passed down a ravine on the right, with a view to outflank the Third regiment, and I ordered Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, with five companies of the Seventh regiment, and who was ably seconded by Major Bradley, to advance to its support, with one six-pounder under the command of Captain Hendricks, and I also ordered two companies of the Sixth regiment to reinforce him.

Lieutenant Colonel Marshall advanced at a double-quick, amidst a shower of balls from the enemy, which, fortunately, did little damage to his command; and after a few volleys he led his men to a charge and cleared the ravine of the savages.

Major McLaren, with Captain Wilson's company, took position on the extreme left of the camp, where he kept at bay a party of the enemy who were endeavoring to gain the rear of the camp, and finally drove them back.

The battle raged for about two hours, the six-pounder and mountain howitzer being used with great effect, when the Indians, repulsed at all points with great loss, retired with great precipitation.

I regret to state that many casualties occurred on our side. The gallant Major Welch was badly wounded in the leg, and Captain Wilson of the Sixth regiment was severely bruised by a nearly spent ball in the shoulder. Four of our men were killed, and between thirty and forty wounded, most of them, I am rejoiced to say, not severely.

The loss of the enemy, according to the statement of a half-breed named Joseph Campbell, who visited the camp under a flag of truce, was thirty killed and a large number wounded. We found and buried fourteen of the bodies, and as the habit of the Indians is to carry off the bodies of their slain, it is not probable that the sum told by Campbell was exaggerated.

The severe chastisement inflicted upon them has so far sub-

dued their ardor that they sent a flag of truce into the camp to express the sentiment of the Wahpetons, composing a part of the attacking force, and to state that they were not strong enough to fight us, and desired peace, with permission to take away their dead and wounded. I replied that when the prisoners were delivered up it would be time enough to talk of peace, and that I would not grant them permission either to take their dead or wounded.

I am assured by Campbell that there is serious depression in the Indian camp,—many having been opposed to the war, but driven into the field by the more violent. He further stated that eight hundred Indians were assembled at the Yellow Medicine, within two miles of the camp, but that the greater part took no part in the fight. The intention of Little Crow was to attack us last night, but he was overruled by others, who told him if he was a brave man he ought to fight the white man by daylight. I am fully prepared against night attack, should it be attempted, although I think the lesson received by them to-day will make them very cautious for the future.

I have already adverted to the courage and skill of Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, and Majors Welch and Bradley, to which I beg leave to add those of the officers and men under their respective commands. Lieutenant Colonel Averill and Major McLaren were equally prompt in their movements in preparing the Sixth regiment for action, and were both under fire for some time. Captains Grant and Bromley shared the dangers of the field with Lieutenant Colonel Marshall's command, while Captain Wilson, with his command, rendered efficient service. The other companies of the Sixth regiment were not engaged, having been held in position to defend the rear of the camp, but it was difficult to restrain their ardor, so anxious were officers and men to share with their comrades the perils of the field. To Lieutenant Colonel Fowler, my A. A. G., I have been greatly indebted for aid in all my movements, his military knowledge and ability being invaluable to me, and his assistance in to-day's affair particularly so. To Major Forbes, Messrs. Patch, Greig, and McLeod, of my staff, who carried my orders, I must also acknowledge myself under obligations for their activity and zeal, while to Major Brown, also of my staff, though suffering from illness, it would be injustice not to state that he aided me materially by his exertions and advice. The medical staff of the several regiments

were cool and expert in rendering their professional aid to the wounded. Assistant Surgeon Seigneuret, attached to my staff, is to be commended for his skill and diligence.

I am very much in want of bread rations, six-pounder ammunition, and shells for the howitzer, and unless soon supplied I shall be compelled to fall back, which, under present circumstances, would be a calamity, as it would afford time for the escape of the Indians with their captives. I hope a large body of cavalry is, before this, on their way to join us. If I had been provided with five hundred of this description of force to-day, I venture the assertion that I could have killed the greater part of the Indians, and brought the campaign to a successful close.

Rev. Mr. Riggs, chaplain of the expedition, so well known for his knowledge of the character and language of the Indians, has been of great service to me since he joined my command.

I inclose the official report of Lieutenant Colonel Marshall. I omitted to mention Lieutenant Gorman and his corps of Renville Rangers. They have been extremely useful to me by their courage and skill as skirmishers. Captain Hendricks and his artillerists won deserved praise to-day, and Captain Sterrett, with his small but gallant corps of cavalry, twenty-seven in number, did good service also.

I send reports of the several surgeons, embracing lists of the killed and wounded.<sup>1</sup> Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Colonel, Commanding.*

HEADQUARTERS WOOD LAKE CAMP,

September 24, 1862.

*Ma-za-ka-tame, Taopee, and Wa-ke-nan-nan-te, at Red Irons Village,*

MY FRIENDS: I call you so, because I have reason to believe that you have had nothing to do with the cruel murders and massacres that have been committed upon the poor white people who had placed confidence in the friendship of the Sioux Indians. I repeat, what I have already stated to you, that I have not come to make war upon those who are innocent, but

<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Series I, Vol. XIII., pp. 278-280.



upon the guilty. I have waited here one day, and intended to wait still another day to hear from the friendly half-breeds and Indians, because I feared that if I advanced my troops before you could make your arrangements the war party would murder the prisoners.

Now that I learn from Joseph Campbell that most of the captives are in safety in our camp I shall move on to-morrow, so that you may expect to see me very soon. Have a white flag displayed so that my men may not fire upon you.<sup>1</sup>

Your Friend,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Colonel, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS WOOD LAKE,

September 24, 1862.

*Ta-tanka-nazin, Chief of the Sisseton-wans and Tah-ton-ka-na-ken-yan, Soldiers of Wa-na-tams Band, Red Irons Village:*

If you are the friends of your Great American Father you are my friends also. I have not come up to make war upon any bands who have not been concerned in the horrible murders upon the white people, who depended upon the good faith of the Indians. You would do well, therefore, to advise your bands not to mix yourselves together with the bands that have been guilty of these outrages, for I do not wish to injure any innocent person; but I intend to pursue the wicked murderers with fire and sword until I overtake them. Another large body of troops will meet these bad men if they attempt to escape either to the Red river or to the Missouri. Such of the Indians as have not had anything to do with the murders of the whites will not be injured by my troops; but, on the contrary, they will be protected by me when I arrive, which will be very soon. Those who are our friends must raise a white flag when they see me approaching, that I may be able to know my friends from my enemies. Take these words to your bands, that they may know that they are in safety as long as they remain friends of your Great Father.<sup>2</sup>

Your Friend,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Colonel, Commanding Military Expedition.*

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, Series I., Vol. XIII., pp. 666, 667.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 667.

CAMP RELEASE, OPPOSITE MOUTH OF CHIPPEWA RIVER,  
September 27, 1862.

*General Pope, St. Paul,*

GENERAL: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your dispatch of nineteenth [seventeenth?] instant. It reached me last evening by Colonel Crooks. In reply you will permit me to remark that celerity of movement cannot well take place when my troops are entirely unsupplied with sufficient rations and are necessitated to dig potatoes from the Indian fields to supply the want of breadstuffs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yesterday I came to this point with my command, having been met by several half-breeds with a flag of truce. I encamped within five hundred yards of a large camp of about one hundred and fifty lodges of friendly Indians and half-breeds, who had separated themselves from Little Crow and the miserable crew with him, and had rescued from them most of the white captives awaiting my arrival.

About two o'clock in the afternoon I paid a formal visit to this camp, attended by the members of my staff and the commanding officers of corps, with two companies of infantry as an escort.

Leaving the latter on the outside of the line of lodges I entered the camp, where I found that regular rifle-pits had been constructed, in anticipation of an attack by the hostile Indians. I told the interpreter to call the chiefs and headmen together, for I had something to say to them. The Indians and half-breeds assembled accordingly in considerable numbers, and I proceeded to give them very briefly my views of the late proceedings; my determination that the guilty parties should be pursued and overtaken, if possible, and I made a demand that all the captives should be delivered to me instantly, that I might take them to my camp. After speeches, in which they severely condemned the war party and denied any participation in their proceedings and gave me assurance that they would not have dared to come and shake my hand if their own were stained with the blood of the whites, they assembled the captive women and children, and formally delivered them up to me, and among the number ninety-one pure whites. When taking the names of such as had been instrumental in obtaining the release of the prisoners from the hos-

tile Indians and telling the principal men I would hold another council with them to-day, I conducted the poor captives to my camp, where I had prepared tents for their accommodation. There were some instances of stolidity among them, but for the most part the poor creatures, relieved of the horrible suspense in which they have been left, and some of the younger women freed from the loathsome attentions to which they had been subjected by their brutal captors, were fairly overwhelmed with joy. I am doing the best I can for them, and will send them down to-day, together with a large number of half-breeds, who have been also kept in restraint here. The first mentioned are pure white women and children, two or three of the latter being very small orphans, all their relatives having been killed. A list of them will accompany this communication.

After the disastrous result to himself [Little Crow] and the bands associated with him at the battle of Wood Lake the half-breeds report that falling back to this point they hastily struck their tents and commenced retreating in great terror.

I must now await the arrival of a provision train from below, and it may not reach me for three or four days, in which case my command will be reduced to the verge of starvation.

In conclusion, General, as I have accomplished two of the objects of the expedition, to-wit, checking and beating the Indians and relieving the settlements, and secondly, the delivery of the prisoners held by them (with a few exceptions, for it seems the hostile party have still a few with them, supposed to be not over twelve or fifteen), I respectfully ask that you will relieve me of the command of the expedition, and place at its head some one of your officers who is qualified to follow up the advantages already gained and conduct it to a successful issue. Having borne the burden and fatigue incident to the organization of the forces in the field, and there being nothing left to do but to follow up the Indians vigorously and exterminate them, if possible, I am of the opinion that a strictly military commander would be better fitted for the task than myself. Besides, my private affairs are left in utter confusion and require my presence.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 679, 680.

## HEADQUARTERS CAMP RELEASE,

September 30, 1862.

*Major General John Pope, Commanding Department of the Northwest, St. Paul,*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt, per Captain Atchison, your aid-de-camp, of your dispatch of twenty-third instant, in which you give the assurance of protecting the rear of this column and furnishing proper supplies, both of which are not only important, but indispensable. The work of the military commission still continues, and new developments take place daily incriminating parties in the friendly camp. Indians are arrested daily on charges duly preferred by me, but as the proceedings are of course secret, it is impossible now to state how many will be convicted. The camp would be in a starving state but for the potatoes found in the Indian fields; but I learn that a small provision train will reach me to-morrow, not sufficient, however, to justify a farther advance into the Indian country. Little Crow and his adherents are making their escape as speedily as possible.

Intelligence just received of a reliable character states that he had already reached a point one hundred and twenty miles distant from this camp, so that a pursuit with infantry alone is out of the question. Unless a full supply of provisions and forage, with five hundred mounted men at least, can be sent on at once, the campaign may be considered as closed for this autumn. The grass is already so dry as to afford insufficient nourishment to the horses and cattle, so that grain cannot be dispensed with, and there is none except unshelled corn on this side of Fort Ridgley.

Having been suffering from ill health for several days I shall probably report myself in person to you at St. Paul very soon, in which case I shall devolve the command temporarily on Colonel Crooks of the Sixth regiment. This corps is absolutely at a stand for the reasons stated, to-wit, want of necessary provisions and forage, so that my presence can well be dispensed with after the proceedings of the military commission have been closed, and the friendly Indians and half-breeds dispatched to gather the crops of corn and potatoes in the fields below.

The rescued captives of pure white blood, amounting in number thus far to exactly one hundred, and half-breeds probably one hundred and fifty more, will go down to-morrow.

There is probably not a hostile Indian below this of the Sioux tribe, so that I apprehend no further danger to the settlements now. But even if no farther pursuit of Little Crow can be made this fall, it will be necessary to station strong garrisons at points above Fort Ridgley, with a sufficient force of mounted men to pursue and destroy any band of prowlers who may be compelled by hunger to renew these depredations. Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Colonel, Commanding Military Expedition.*

N. B.—I have evidence that Little Priest and part of his band of Winnebagoes participated in the hostilities at New Ulm and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

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HEADQUARTERS INDIAN EXPEDITION,

CAMP RELEASE, October 3, 1862.

Those Indians of the Medawakanton, and Wahpeton bands of the Sioux who have separated themselves from Little Crow and desire to return and surrender themselves to their Great Father, must come down and encamp near me, sending in advance two of their principal men with a white flag. This must be done immediately, for there are other bodies of troops in search of Little Crow who will attack any camp they find unless they have protection. I will see that no innocent person is injured who comes to me without delay. Unless these people arrive very soon I will go in search of them with my troops and treat them as enemies; and if any more murders and depredations are committed upon the white settlers I will destroy every camp of the Lower Indians I can find without mercy.<sup>2</sup>

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Colonel, Commanding Military Expedition.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 694, 695.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 709.

## HEADQUARTERS CAMP RELEASE,

October 3, 1862.

*Wanatua, Standing Buffalo, Tah-ton-ka-nangee, and Wa-mun-dee-on-pe-du-tah, Chiefs of the Sisseton Sioux,*

MY FRIENDS: I am sorry to hear that you allowed Little Crow and the bad men to escape into your country. After I had beaten them and killed many of their number you should have stopped him until I could have overtaken him and his band and destroyed them. Now he must be pursued by my troops into your country, but you will not be injured nor any of your men who have not been engaged in the murders perpetrated by the bad Indians. I learn that you intend to come down to see me with some of your bands. I do not wish you to do so, because I have a great many men who are very angry because so many of their white relations have been killed, and they might not be able to distinguish you from the guilty bands, and fire upon you. I do not wish you to suffer from any such mistake; therefore I desire you to remain at your own villages until I can have time to go and talk to you in council. Keep your bands separate from the wicked men who have broken peace with their Great Father. There are many other troops going in search of these bad men besides those I have with me, and they will all be caught and punished.<sup>1</sup>

Your Friend,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Colonel, Commanding Military Expedition.*

## CAMP RELEASE, MINNESOTA,

October 7, 1862.

*Brigadier General H. H. Sibley,*

SIR: The undersigned, after cordially congratulating you upon your recent well-merited promotion, beg leave to represent that they have learned with much regret that you have asked to be relieved from your present command. They respectfully ask that you will immediately withdraw said application and remain in command of the expedition. They further earnestly request that you will use your best exertions with Major General Pope to consolidate a brigade of the new Minnesota regiments, and that you remain in command thereof till the end of the war.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 708, 709.

If at all consistent with public duty they would be gratified to have an opportunity after the close of this campaign to bring together and drill the scattered fragments and parts of the regiments for two or three months, or such other length of time as the major general commanding may deem best, previous to the march against the common foe.<sup>1</sup> Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servants,

WM. CROOKS.

STEPHEN MILLER,

*Colonel, Seventh Minnesota.*

WM. R. MARSHALL,

*Lieutenant Colonel, Seventh Minnesota.*

GEORGE BRADLEY,

*Major, Seventh Minnesota.*

R. N. McLAREN,

*Major, Sixth Minnesota.*

R. C. OLIN,

*Lieutenant, Third Minnesota.*

M. HENDRICKS,

*Captain, Battery.*

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HEADQUARTERS MILITARY EXPEDITION,

CAMP RELEASE, October 17, 1862.

*Major General John Pope, Commanding Department of the Northwest, St. Paul, Minnesota,*

GENERAL: Since my last, acknowledging receipt of your dispatches of the tenth instant, I have received no dispatches from your headquarters.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have now 123 Indian men prisoners, including the 20 first sentenced, and 236 men are confined at Yellow Medicine, 20 miles below this point.

As the Indians reported their force at Yellow Medicine to be about 750 (exclusive of half-breeds, who were forced to be present), about one-third of whom did not participate in the conflict there, or rather at Wood lake, my estimate is as follows, based on the best information I can obtain, to-wit:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 720.



Entire force of the Medawakanton, Sioux, and Wahpetons.....	750
Prisoners in Camp Release.....	123
Friendly Indians (scouts) in same camp.....	5
Prisoners at Yellow Medicine, strictly confined.....	236
Friendly Indians there, under surveillance.....	63
Killed in engagement at Wood lake (known at least).....	30
Wounded (supposed).....	40
	<hr/> 497

Say 500 warriors accounted for, leaving 250, besides the 100 in White Lodge and Sleepy Eyes' bands of Sioux Sissetons, who committed the Lake Shetek massacres, yet to be found and dealt with. I believe the above to be nearly correct. If there is any error, it will be found to be in overrating the men still at large. The estimate embraces all the bands below Big Stone lake. I am convinced I am not far wrong when I state the Sioux Indians above as follows:

Sissetons of Standing Buffalo, Wanatua, and Red Feather, with other smaller bands at Big Stone lake and Lake Traverse.....	450
Eastern Yanktonnais, including Cut-Heads and Ouk patients [Uncapapa?]	800
	<hr/> 1,250

The latter may be somewhat underestimated, but they do not in any case exceed in number 1,000 warriors. To these may be added about 400 Missouri Yanktons, with whom the Eastern Yanktonnais are intimately connected, and by whom they could readily be reinforced.

You have, therefore, General, within your department limits or immediately adjacent:

Refugee Medawakanton and Wahpetons.....	250
Lower Sissetons.....	100
Upper Sissetons and Eastern Yanktonnais.....	1,450
Missouri Yanktons.....	400
	<hr/> 2,200

Making an aggregate force of 2,200 Sioux warriors, provided they are not strengthened by the Teton bands across the Missouri. The fractional brigade under my command, if aided by a few hundred mounted men to overtake and bring to bay these prairie savages, is able to whip the whole of them even if combined; but as they are well provided for the most part with good horses, they could easily elude the pursuit of footmen alone.

I think it may be safely calculated that one-half of the first 350 above set down will be captured and destroyed before spring, as they must come in from the prairie before winter.

I have made the foregoing enumeration, General, to furnish you with such information as may be useful to you in forming your plans for the future.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS MILITARY EXPEDITION,

CAMP RELEASE, October 21, 1862.

*Major General John Pope, Commanding Department of the Northwest, St. Paul, Minnesota,*

GENERAL: Your dispatch of seventeenth instant reached me to-day through Lieutenant Shelley. I shall of course change my plans so as to accord with your orders. The commission is proceeding with the trials of prisoners as rapidly as possible. More than 120 cases have been disposed of, the greater part of whom have been found guilty of murder and other atrocious crimes, and there remain still nearly 300 to be tried.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lieutenant Colonel Marshall has just arrived with his detachment and 39 men and about 100 women and children prisoners. Among the former are known to be several murderers and rascals, who will of course be made to pay the penalty of their crimes. I have now about 400 Indian men in irons and between 60 and 70 under surveillance here and at the Yellow Medicine.

Lieutenant Colonel Marshall proceeded to within 35 miles of the James river and he passed within 26 miles of Big Stone lake. He took captive all the Indians to be found in the district of country visited by him, and the prisoners report the Sissetons and Eastern Yanktonnais to be several days' march farther west. When his report is received it will be transmitted to your headquarters. He was ably assisted by Major Brown of my staff, who accompanied him, as

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 744-746.

well as by Captain Valentine of the Sixth, and Curtis of the Seventh, regiments, and Lieutenant Swan, in immediate command of the mounted men, whose companies, with a mounted howitzer, under the charge of Sergeant O'Shea, composed his force.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 756, 757.

III.

**OFFICIAL MILITARY REPORTS AND DISPATCHES**

OF

**GENERAL HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY,**

OF

**COLONELS M<sup>O</sup>PHAIL, CROOKS, MARSHALL, MILLER, AND BAKER,**  
**OF THE FIRST, SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH, AND TENTH**  
**REGIMENTS, MINNESOTA VOLUNTEERS,**

AND OF

**MAJOR GENERALS HALLECK AND POPE.**

**SECOND SIOUX CAMPAIGN,**

**1863.**

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[This third part of the appendix contains military dispatches and reports from General Sibley and others, during the second Sioux campaign. From the close of the first campaign, or Battle of Wood Lake, September 23, 1862, to the opening of the second campaign, or march from Camp Pope, June 16, 1863, was a period of somewhat more than eight months, occupied, with the release of the captives, the trial, condemnation, and execution of the Indian criminals sentenced to death, the imprisonment of others adjudged to a milder fate, the disposition of the Indian prisoners, their final expulsion from the state, the abrogation of treaties made with the Sioux Nation, the removal of the Winnebagoes, preparation for the campaign of 1863, and the stationing of troops for the protection of the frontier, during the approaching absence of General Sibley in the field. A multitude of dispatches exist, during this time, most of which we are obliged to omit, to make room for those more important, and of public value. What are here given, cover from February 18, 1863, to October 5, 1863, a period of about eight months. Their subject matter is the general condition of Minnesota and Dakota in the winter, spring, and summer of 1862-1863, the organization of the second Sioux campaign, the vindication of General Sibley by Major General Pope, in command of the military department of the Northwest, the explanation of General Sully's failure to intercept the Indians, according to the plan of the joint expeditions of Generals Sibley and Sully, and the final fortunes of Little Crow.]

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, February 18, 1863.

*Colonel J. C. Kelton, Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters of  
the Army,*

COLONEL: I have the honor to state, for the information of the general-in-chief, that reports from General Sibley, from the Indian agents, and from other respectable persons on the frontier have been received here, and these reports all concur in representing that extensive preparations and combinations are being made among the Sioux for a renewal of hostilities in the spring. Little Crow, it is stated, has succeeded in uniting several of the bands of the Upper Sioux, and that as many as 7,000 warriors will be brought into the field as soon as the spring fairly opens. This number is perhaps overestimated, but all indications point to some serious and extensive operations against the white settlements, and it will be well to provide in time against such an outbreak. I have accordingly instructed General Sibley to organize two columns, if possible, to consist of not less than 2,500 men each, with six pieces of artillery to each column, and to be in readiness to take the field as soon as the grass is sufficiently advanced to subsist his animals. One column will move north from the St. Peter's (Minnesota) river, at the mouth of Yellow Medicine, the other along the Big Sioux, or between that stream and the James river. The Indians are said to be assembled in the vicinity of Devil's lake, on the northern line of Minnesota, and these columns will move against them. At the same time I desire to move a third column, under General Cook, up the Missouri river from Fort Randall, so as to intercept any retreat of the Indians to the south side of the Missouri. The attack of the Indians will doubtless be made upon the settlements along the Missouri and James rivers, if their movements be not anticipated. The only troops I can give to General Cook for this purpose are three companies of the Forty-first Iowa Infantry, now at Sioux City, and part of the regiment of cavalry in Iowa, the organization of eight companies having been completed. I have written to Governor Kirkwood to send up the eight companies of cavalry to report to General Cook at Sioux City, and I have suggested to him that he should fill up the Forty-first regiment by organizing as soon as possible the remaining seven companies. In view

of these operations in the spring, I request that the mounted regiments in Nebraska be placed at the disposal of General Cook for his movement up the Missouri. Under all views of the Indian question, I think it very necessary that demonstration in some force be made on the northern plains in the spring. I think, with the regiments of mounted men in Nebraska, the force will be sufficient. I will transmit to the department copies of the reports of Generals Cook and Sibley.<sup>1</sup> I am, Colonel, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, February 25, 1863.

*Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, Commanding District of Minnesota,*

GENERAL: Your letter of the nineteenth, to Major Selfridge, has been received. All stores, etc., will be sent you as soon as the river opens. The information concerning Little Crow and the intentions of the Sioux Indians is very conflicting, as it reaches me from different quarters. From Fort Randall I learn positively that Little Crow is encamped on the Missouri river, one hundred and fifty miles above Fort Pierre, and that the attack of the Sioux tribes (if any attack be made) will be upon the settlements along the Missouri. About 2,500 men, most of them mounted, will be assembled at Fort Randall as soon as the Missouri can be navigated, for operations up the river, in conjunction with your operations in Minnesota. If, as you apprehend, there is likely to be a formidable movement against Abercrombie, it seems to me that in your movement toward Devil's lake you had best send a large detachment by way of the post, instead of Big Sioux or James river, to unite with you near Devil's lake. It will not be necessary to keep any large garrison at Abercrombie after you commence your movement, nor do I think it at all necessary or desirable that you should keep up the small posts you have established for the winter along the frontier. Don't put yourself on the defensive, but on the offensive. With the

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part II., pp. 116, 117.

force you have, it seems clear to me that you can organize two columns, each of sufficient strength to deal with the whole body of Indians. One of these columns you can send, if you think best, by way of Abercrombie and the valley of the Red river, but in order to do this you must abandon the idea of maintaining all these small posts through the country. Five or six hundred men will be enough to leave at Fort Ripley to keep the Chippewas quiet. All the other (or most of the other) posts I would break up, and take the troops with you as you pass beyond them in your march north. Make your preparations complete. I will do all I can to forward your plans. There are no troops in this state except those now under orders for the South, where they are greatly needed, and I cannot bring myself to believe that you lack troops in Minnesota. I have written fully to the department concerning the Indian prisoners, both the condemned and those at Snelling. I will have you relieved of them before you move.<sup>1</sup>

Respectfully, etc.,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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WASHINGTON, D. C., March 23, 1863.

*Major General Pope, Milwaukee, Wisconsin,*

GENERAL: Your letters of the twelfth, in regard to condemned Indian prisoners, and also requesting that additional brigadier generals be sent to you, are received.

Your letters in regard to the Indian prisoners have several times been laid before the secretary of war, and always with the same result. The department of the interior refuses to take charge of them, or to furnish any means for their support. We, therefore, have no alternative but to guard and feed them until the president sees fit to otherwise dispose of them.

Brigadier General Sibley has been reappointed, and is for duty in your department; as also General Smith, formerly of your staff. General Roberts will be sent to you as soon as he can be replaced at Harper's Ferry. Probably another will

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 123.



also be sent. But three brigadier generals are a full proportion for the number of your troops. In all the departments brigades are commanded by colonels.<sup>1</sup> Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. W. HALLECK,  
*General-in-Chief.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, April 4, 1863.

*Colonel J. C. Kelton, Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters of the Army, Washington, D. C.,*

COLONEL: I have the honor to report, for the information of the general-in-chief, that I have received letters from General Cook, informing me that scouts and runners, whom he sent up the Missouri some weeks since, have returned and report that the Indians having been informed of the proposed movements against them from the Missouri and Minnesota, have moved off toward Devil's lake, with the purpose of taking refuge in the British possessions on the Lower Red river. From the account sent by General Cook, it seems that the fact of the expedition moving against them as soon as the spring opens was communicated to the Indians by white traders from the Selkirk settlements, who invited them, in view of their danger, to move into the British possessions, assuring them of protection and assistance in the way of arms and ammunition. I do not doubt that much of this information is true, and that the Indians, if they find themselves unable to resist, will retreat north beyond our frontier. How much assistance they will receive, or how much encouragement will be given them at the British post and agencies I do not know, but it seems now probable that the expeditions will find none of these Indians within our own territory. I am going up to St. Paul in the course of a couple of weeks, and shall instruct Generals Sibley and Cook to pursue these hostile Indians who have committed depredations within our lines, or whose usual homes are in our country, wherever they may go, regardless of boundary lines. These orders will be carried out unless I am otherwise instructed by the government. Otherwise the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

result will be that the Indians, having a secure place of refuge, will be at liberty to resume hostilities whenever a favorable occasion presents itself, and all expeditions against them must fail of success. This result will involve the necessity of keeping the large force in this department constantly on the frontier until the Indians choose to close their hostilities. Unless they are followed into the Selkirk settlements, or anywhere else they may choose to go, the campaign against them must of necessity be a failure, unless, indeed, they choose to risk a battle. If they are not pursued, as soon as our forces are withdrawn to Minnesota and Missouri, the Indians will follow them up, and renew their attacks upon defenseless settlements. Unless thoroughly punished this summer, there will be constant difficulty with them for years to come. If the government do not desire me to push into the British possessions in pursuit of any hostile Indians, I respectfully request to be informed of it as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup> I am, Colonel, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,  
*Major General.*

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON, April 11, 1863.

*Major General Pope, Milwaukee, Wisconsin,*

The president directs that under no circumstances will our troops cross the boundary line into British territory without his authority.<sup>2</sup>

H. W. HALLECK,  
*General-in-Chief.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, May 19, 1863.

*Major General H. W. Halleck, General-in-Chief, Washington, D. C.,*

GENERAL: I have the honor to transmit inclosed copy of dispatch from General Sibley, which reiterates views and opinions I have already laid before the government. This dispatch is submitted only for the purpose of again inviting the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 198, 199.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

attention of the president to this subject. I understand that the authorities of the Hudson Bay Company in the region concerned are more than willing that our troops should pursue their operations against the hostile Sioux anywhere within the British possessions, and I submit this telegram of General Sibley in the hope that the necessary authority may be obtained from the English Government through its minister in Washington. The people of this region of British America are quite as much interested as ourselves to keep the wild Indians in subjection, but they have neither the military force to do this themselves nor the influence to control the action of these Indians, either in regard to themselves or to us. Unless, therefore, authority can be obtained to pursue the hostile Sioux wherever they may seek refuge north of our boundary, it is nearly certain that the Indian campaign will be fruitless of results. The subject is worthy of the serious attention of the government, and I submit it accordingly.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, June 1, 1863.

*Colonel J. C. Kelton, Assistant Adjutant General,*

COLONEL: I have the honor to report, for the information of the general-in-chief, that the following plan of operations for the summer campaign against the Indians has been made, and will be carried out as fully and expeditiously as practicable. The hostile Sioux are encamped at Devil's lake and on the upper waters of the James river (Rivière au Jacques). There are a number of bands, some of them from the Upper Missouri. It is believed that there is great dissatisfaction amongst them, and very great difference of opinion, both as to the policy of making war at all, and as to the manner and place of carrying it on. It is very doubtful whether any sort of understanding will be arrived at between the various bands. General Sibley marches from the Upper Minnesota (above Fort Ridgley), with 2,000 infantry and 800 cavalry, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 288, 289.

necessary batteries of mountain howitzers. He carries supplies for upward of three months. He will march nearly direct upon Devil's lake, sending detachments by way of Red river. He leaves behind him about 3,000 men, under a competent officer, for the protection of the frontier against moving bands during his absence. These troops are established at various points, from north to south, along the whole line of outer settlements, and are certainly more than sufficient, even if the whole of the Indians should disperse themselves for such desultory warfare. It is probable that you may be annoyed with complaints of insufficient forces being left for the defense of frontier settlements; such complaints are sometimes really dictated by fear, but in many cases by very different motives. In all events, you will understand that 3,000 men are thus left, and I am sure no reasonable people could ask more. I do not myself believe that one-half this force is needed for such a purpose, but I have left them in order that the timid, spiritless population of foreigners along the frontier (Norwegians and Germans) may not abandon their villages and farms, and pour into the river towns. General Sully moves up the Missouri, with 2,000 cavalry and some light howitzer batteries, to a point southwest of Devil's lake, and will then cross the country to that place to meet Sibley, thus cutting off any retreat of the Indians toward the Missouri river. He is directed to move a portion of his command up the south side of the Missouri river, in case there is any apprehension of Indian troubles on the frontier of Nebraska. Late advices from there certainly contradict any report of trouble in that region. As soon as operations against the Indians near Devil's lake and on James river are completed, Sully is directed to return to the Missouri river, to traverse the whole country on both sides of the river as far as the Black Hills, visiting all the Sioux tribes he possibly can. He will be supplied with rations for four months, to be kept on the steamers which accompany his expedition up the river. He has a small train of wagons, and can move with great celerity. Sibley is instructed to move east from Devil's lake to Pembina, one portion of his command returning on the west side of Red river, whilst the other visits Red lake and all the Chippewa tribes between that place and the Mississippi at the mouth of Crow Wing river. He will take such forces as are necessary to insure quiet in that region for some time to come. My own belief is that there will

be no considerable, if, indeed, there be any, fight. Most of the Indians assembled near Devil's lake and on James river are planting Indians, who have been accustomed to depend upon their crops of corn for a large part of their supply of food. The moment they find they will be prevented from raising any crops at all by the advance of our forces, and that they must fight so large a force successfully, I do not doubt that a very large part of them will come on and deliver themselves up. It will be well for the government to consider carefully in advance what disposition had best be made of such Indians. There is no sort of use to make a treaty of peace with them; such treaties amount to nothing, as they are only kept by Indians as long as they find it convenient; but such a condition of things will give the government the opportunity to make a final and favorable disposition of a large number of troublesome Indians, so as to secure perfect quiet in the future. I therefore invite attention to the subject at this early day, as I do not doubt that much of what is here stated as my belief is true. My own views as to the disposition of these Indians I have already laid before the government, and it is unnecessary to repeat them here. A portion of the Indians will, without doubt, take refuge in the British possessions, and such must be left to be dealt with as the government determines hereafter. It is possible that I may be mistaken in this view of the conduct of the Indians, but even if they are united and give battle, or make war in any other way, there is abundant force to deal with them. The Missouri river is lower than it has been for thirty years, and, as little snow fell in the mountains, the June rise will be slight. I fear, therefore, that Sully may be delayed somewhat, though I have done all that is possible to prevent it. After the expedition leaves the frontier, nothing more will be needed by them, and we shall probably hear but seldom from them during their absence. I hope, early in the autumn, to be able to send nearly the whole of these forces South.<sup>1</sup> I am, Colonel, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 304, 305.

WASHINGTON, July 17, 1863, 12:25 P. M.

*Major General Pope, Department of the Northwest :*

It is reported here by ————— and others of high standing that General Sibley's command is altogether too large for the object in view; that one-third of the number would be much more efficient against the Indians, and could be subsisted with much less difficulty. Would it not be better to recall a portion of his forces, now that there is no probability of its meeting any large body of Indians?<sup>1</sup>

H. W. HALLECK,  
*General-in-Chief.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL,  
MILWAUKEE, July 18, 1863.

*Major General H. W. Halleck, General-in-Chief, Washington,*

GENERAL: I have the honor, in answer to your telegram of yesterday, to submit the following statement:

The whole force with which General Sibley marched from his camp above Fort Ridgley was 2,800 men. The regiments were all new and little accustomed to the hardships of a march. From all experience, therefore, by the time he reached Abercrombie his effective force would be reduced to 2,300 men at most. I have no information which leads me in any way to the belief that General Sibley will encounter any less force of Indians than was supposed from the beginning. On the contrary, last advices (and they are certainly as late, and quite as reliable, to say the least, as anybody else can have) represent the Indians as still concentrated near Devil's lake. This expedition was organized throughout by General Sibley. He has passed his whole life in Minnesota, and knows Indian character well. He conducted the successful campaign of last autumn against the Sioux, in the midst of the same carping and fault-finding. He has had time, and it has been his business (to which, I know, he has devoted all his time and energy for months past), to inform himself thoroughly of the intentions and force of the Indians, and of the necessary means and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 380.

modes of conducting a successful campaign against them. I have received letters from him several times since he commenced his march. I have seen no reason, from them or from anything else within my knowledge, to occasion any suspicions that he has been mistaken in his preparations, or anticipates any interruption to the course he has marked out. Surely, under these circumstances, it may be fairly presumed that General Sibley understands his business as well, at least, as anybody else does. I do not consider it judicious to send him any orders on the subject. I am very sure that if circumstances occur which will enable him to dispense with any part of his force, he will do so without requiring orders. I shall send him a copy of your dispatch and of this letter, so that he may be fully advised on the subject. The reports in the papers concerning his expedition are, no doubt, as untrue as newspaper reports usually are. I have received nothing from him which, in the remotest degree, justifies such stories.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, July 21, 1863.

*Major General H. W. Halleck, Washington,*

GENERAL: The inclosed copy of a St. Paul newspaper contains a very full account of Sibley's expedition up to July 5th. You will readily see how utterly mistaken are those who put in circulation the accounts in the papers, which are, doubtless, repeated to you. I will endeavor to keep you advised of everything of importance in this department, and I think my opportunities for knowing the condition of affairs in this department are as good, if not better, than those of any one not connected with the military service. Representations and applications similar to those made in regard to the present expedition were made to me last autumn, and I was urged, with many authentic statements of facts, to remove Sibley from the command of the expedition last September, only a

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 381, 382.



few weeks before he brought it to a most successful termination. As I declined to accede to such applications, it is likely they have been transferred to you, but I think you will save yourself much trouble and annoyance by referring them again to me. I have every hope that the combined movements of Sully and Sibley will put a decisive end to Indian hostilities in the Northwest. Of course, small parties of hostile Indians will endeavor to harass the border settlements, in the hope to arrest Sibley's march. This was to be expected, and a large force and every precaution has been devoted to preventing any considerable trouble. There are not troops enough in our whole armies to satisfy the people of Minnesota, and place a regiment or company in the front door of every settler's house in the country. A few Indians, never more than three or four together, have been lurking about on the frontier, far in the rear of Sibley, but they ought easily to be dealt with by the people alone, without the aid of soldiers. Nevertheless, a very large force of troops is posted along the entire frontier settlements, and is constantly patrolling the line of frontier. This horse stealing, and occasional outrage by one or two Indians at a time, who steal into the settlements, all the troops in the world could not prevent. Every precaution has been taken to make the Indian campaign successful, and I believe it will be so if mistaken interferences of over-anxious citizens of the frontier are not suffered to embarrass the military operations.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,  
*Major General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, July 21, 1863.

*Colonel J. O. Kelton, Assistant Adjutant General, Washington,  
D. C.,*

COLONEL: I have the honor to report that I am just in receipt of letters from General Sibley, dated on the fourth instant, from the Cheyenne river, up which stream he is marching to Devil's lake. He has had some trouble, but not much, having marched one hundred and sixty miles in thirteen days.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 385, 386.

He is advancing on Devil's lake as rapidly as possible by the valley of the Cheyenne. The Indians, he reports, are said to be concentrating on the river above him for the purpose of giving him battle. General Sully is by this time marching east from the Missouri for Devil's lake, and will soon be in the immediate vicinity of Sibley. Either column alone is abundantly able to deal with the combined force of Indians.<sup>1</sup> I am Colonel, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, July 27, 1863.

*Major General H. W. Halleck, Washington, D. C.,*

GENERAL: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the letter of William F. Lockwood, on the subject of apprehended Indian troubles in Nebraska, with your indorsement thereon.

Mr. Lockwood is doubtless right when he says that "protection to the settlers is the leading consideration," but when he says that protection can best be rendered by keeping the troops assigned to that duty amongst the settlements, he is stating what is contradicted by all military experience on the frontier for the last twenty years. Nothing is better known than the fact that it requires five times as many troops to protect in this way a line of frontier settlements as the Indians can possibly bring against them, and that so long as this system of defensive operations is kept up, just that long this greatly superior force of white troops must be maintained. Besides this, under such a system, the frontier farms and small settlements not actually occupied by a military force are constantly subjected to encroachments of small parties of Indians, who, having no fear of the invasion of their own country and homes, spend their time in stealing into the settlements to commit depredations. I suppose if there is one fact demonstrated clearly by an experience in Indian warfare it is that no such defensive policy is wise, and that it only leads to great and increasing expense, and to the constant alarm and uneasi-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 386.

ness of frontier settlers. Our troops on the frontier have of late years certainly been posted, not in the settlements, but at points as near as possible to the Indians, and in such positions that their garrisons can be most readily concentrated. When Indian hostilities break out, campaigns are at once made against them, and in nearly every case with sufficient success to restore peace for some time at least.

A review of Mr. Lockwood's letter leads me properly to speak of the condition of Indian affairs in Minnesota, and to answer very briefly the fault-findings and misrepresentations which certain parties have carried to the government. Without commenting on the motives of this spirit of carping and finding fault, I shall assume that the parties making these objections to Sibley's expedition, and the military arrangement in Minnesota, really believe what they say, and entertain in good faith the apprehensions they express. What are the facts? Even after Sibley's successful campaign of last autumn (which, by the way, was followed by the same representations and fault-finding), my intention of sending a large part of the force under his command to Grant's army having become known, I was assailed by a storm of remonstrance and entreaty against sending a man away from the state. I was assured solemnly that the whole region west of the Mississippi was in imminent danger from Indians, and, if any of the troops were sent away, the country west of the river would be abandoned, and the inhabitants would precipitate themselves upon the river towns. In fact, I was informed by the highest authority that the exodus was already begun, in consequence of my purpose to remove the troops having become known. To such an extent was this carried, that I was compelled to address a letter to the governor for publication, promising that the troops should remain at their stations along the frontier for the winter. Of course, no movement against the Indians was practicable until the spring opened.

It was, and is, my belief that the government wishes this Indian war brought to a close as soon as possible, and the troops sent where they are greatly needed. This, therefore, was, and is, my first object. The question was, how this could best be done. I knew perfectly well that any attempt to send troops South from Minnesota would lead to the same apprehensions and remonstrances which met me in the autumn. I knew, too, that if I allowed the troops to remain posted along

the frontier, their stay in the state would be unlimited, as the people certainly would never consent to their being sent out of the country, and would abandon their farms and the settlements at the first movement of the kind. I need not tell you what a storm of remonstrance and entreaty would have been visited upon the authorities at Washington, nor how impossible to have resisted it. It became necessary, therefore, as soon as the spring opened, to make, as rapidly as possible, such a campaign against the Indians as would assure the security of the frontier and restore confidence to the people. Unless this could be done, there was no hope of being able to send the troops South. In this view, the expeditions of Sibley and Sully were organized. Sibley's campaign is probably over by this time, as on the twenty-second instant he was to reach Devil's lake, where the Indians were still concentrating as late as the eleventh of July. He will return with little delay, and will probably reach Fort Snelling with the larger part of his command by the last of August or the first week in September. Sully, as soon as he hears of Sibley's arrival at Devil's lake and its result, will cross to the south side of the Missouri and deal with the Sioux in that region.

From these two expeditions I expect the happiest results—an end of the Indian war, the security of the frontier, and the departure of a large part of the troops South, without objection. By pursuing any other course, they would, by mere force of entreaty and remonstrance, backed up by strong influence, have been forced to spend another winter, and perhaps another, in Minnesota. No one knows better than yourself how difficult it is to get troops away from any frontier settlement where momentary necessity has occasioned their being posted. People who never felt apprehensions before, immediately find troops absolutely necessary for their protection, and really believe it to be so. Every means is, therefore, used to prevent their removal, unless it is demonstrated there is no longer danger, even remote. This apprehension and this reluctance to the removal of troops once posted among them has been ludicrously illustrated this spring. Although Sibley left a very large force behind him along the frontier settlements (five times as large as ever was in Minnesota before, when powerful tribes of Indians were still encamped on the Mississippi and surrounded the sparse settlements then existing in the territory), and although he was marching against the

very Indians of whom they were apprehensive, and was constantly interposed between them and the white settlements, there came up a terrible outcry from the whole people west of the Mississippi, through the newspapers, that they were being abandoned; that Sibley was marching away, and the Indians would attack the settlements behind, ridiculing the movement one moment and the next protesting against the expedition, etc. That much of this storm was stimulated by a few persons, for very different reasons, and to accomplish their own purposes, I have abundant reason to know; but that the mass of the people believed themselves in danger I have no doubt. Under such circumstances constant alarm and "stampedes" were expected as soon as Sibley got out of sight, but they have been really fewer than I expected. The inclosed slip, from a paper which has been very active in giving circulation to these wild and alarming rumors, will show you just what such stories amount to.

Objection has been made to the size of Sibley's expedition, but without much reason, and little or no knowledge of the facts. Wonderful statements have been made of his difficulty in getting along, of the dreadful suffering of his men, of the breaking [down] of his animals by thirst and starvation, of conferences about abandoning the expedition, etc. These stories were put in circulation while Sibley was without the means of communicating with St. Paul. There was not one word of truth in any of them. The expedition has had no difficulty; it is large enough completely to accomplish the purpose, and to make such demonstration of force on the plains as utterly to put an end to the belief among the Indians that all the fighting men had gone South, and that the white settlements along the frontier were at their mercy, a belief circulated by Little Crow, and which, doubtless, prompted the outbreak last summer. No force much, if any, smaller would have accomplished the purpose. If I had kept the body of troops at these posts, and sent out cavalry or infantry expeditions, no results would have been accomplished which would have induced the people of Minnesota to listen to the idea of sending troops South. The truth is, in plain words, that there are in this state many people who are determined that the troops shall not be taken out of it. They are clearly entitled to some of the government expenditures which they can only get in this way. As long as the apprehensions of the people

can be kept up, the troops will be kept in the state. Of course, no expedition must be successful enough to destroy all danger from Indians; hence Sibley's expedition must fail, and must be embarrassed and belied and misrepresented, so as to make it fail if possible. Whilst some are actuated by these motives, others of whom I have written act in the same direction, with a different object in view.

I believe that the expeditions are properly organized, and that they will accomplish their purposes, and enable the government to send the troops composing them to the South at the earliest possible moment. They were organized with this view, and I am confident of the result.

In relation to the apprehended difficulties in Nebraska, I wrote to Sully before he left Sioux City, to ascertain whether there was any danger south of the Missouri, and if so, to march his command on the north side of the river and cover the settlements as he moved north. He replied that there was no danger, nor has he ever intimated that there were any Indian troubles in Nebraska since, though I have heard from him several times at Sioux City, Fort Randall, and Fort Pierre. Nebraska, as you know, is not in my department.

Sully's force is now not even 1,200 strong, and I cannot reduce it and accomplish what is desired. The Seventh Iowa Cavalry has, however, been sent to General Schofield, and can take the place of the Nebraska regiment now with Sully.

A few days longer and all these matters will be plainly developed. I only give you here my reasons for the course I have taken, and for believing it will prove the wise one.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, August 3, 1863.

*Major General John Pope:*

General Sibley writes July 19th, thirty-five miles this side of Devil's lake: No Indians seen except small scouting parties. Half-breeds report that a few days previous six hundred Sioux

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 403-406.

lodges divided into three parties, Little Crow's adherents forming one, and took different routes. General Sibley leaves his heavy transportation with seven companies in intrenchments, and presses on rapidly with rations for twenty-five days. Little Crow, with nine men, said to have gone to Yellow Medicine for hidden treasures. Nothing heard from General Sully. No scarcity of water or grass, except at isolated points.<sup>1</sup>

S. MILLER,  
*Colonel, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, August 5, 1863.

*Brigadier General Alfred Sully, Commanding Indian Expedition,*

GENERAL: I have just received your letter of twenty-seventh instant, and I assure you it both surprised and disappointed me. I never had the slightest idea you could delay thus along the river, nor do I realize the necessity of such delay. You have one hundred wagons, etc., sent from St. Louis and about twenty with the Sixth regiment from Iowa. I supposed, of course, that knowing, as my letters both to you and General Cook (your predecessor) have time and again informed you, how necessary it was that you should be in position on the Upper Missouri, or between that river and Devil's lake, to co-operate with General Sibley, you would have unloaded any heavy baggage you have, and have loaded your wagons with subsistence stores and have pushed on without delay. I never dreamed you would consider yourself tied to the boats if there were obstacles in going up the river. As matters stand, it seems to me impossible to understand how you have stayed about the river, delaying from day to day, when time of all things was important, and when you had wagons enough to carry at least two months' subsistence for your command.

If you have not adopted this course before this letter reaches you, please do so at once, and move rapidly up the river. Leave all your baggage, and load your wagons with subsistence. Such a failure as you anticipate must not happen, as it will be impossible for you to explain it satisfactorily.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 429.



Sibley has had equal difficulties with yourself, but he reached Devil's lake about the twenty-second, and I should not be surprised to hear of him on the Missouri above you.

If the Indians are driven into the British possessions, where we cannot follow them, we will have done all in our power, and no one can be dissatisfied; but this much must be done. I trust that you will realize the importance of what I here say to you, and will act upon it promptly and fully. Your forces consist entirely of cavalry, and there can be no reason why you should not be able to execute the object of your expedition.<sup>1</sup> Respectfully, General,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF ST. PAUL,

August 5, 1863. (Received August 5.)

*Major General John Pope:*

General Sibley writes, July 21st, that he has advanced thirty miles westward from his position of the nineteenth. Expected to reach Indian camp in four or five days. Little Crow's band is with this camp. The General says there is reason to believe that the Indian killed near Hutchinson, Minnesota, was Little Crow himself; he was absent with a war party, and no other Sioux was known to have withered arms and displaced bones as described. General Sully not heard from.<sup>2</sup>

S. MILLER,

*Colonel, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,

CAMP CARTER, BANK OF JAMES RIVER, August 7, 1863.

MAJOR: My last dispatch was dated twenty-first ultimo, from Camp Olin, in which I had the honor to inform Major General Pope that I had left one-third of my force in an intrenched position at Camp Atchison, and was then one day's

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 434.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 435.

march in advance, with 1,400 infantry and 500 cavalry, in the direction where the main body of the Indians were supposed to be.

During the three following days I pursued a course somewhat west of south, making fifty miles, having crossed the James river and the Great Coteau of the Missouri. On the twenty-fourth, about 1 P. M., being considerably in advance of the main column, with some of the officers of my staff, engaged in looking out for a suitable camping ground, the command having marched steadily from 5 A. M., some of my scouts came to me at full speed, and reported that a large camp of Indians had just before passed, and great numbers of warriors could be seen upon the prairie, two or three miles distant. I immediately corraled my train upon the shore of a salt lake near by, and established my camp, which was rapidly intrenched by Colonel Crooks, to whom was intrusted that duty, for the security of the transportation in case of attack, a precaution I had taken whenever we encamped, for many days previously. While the earthworks were being pushed forward, parties of Indians, more or less numerous, appeared upon the hills around us, and one of my half-breed scouts, a relative of Red Plume, a Sisseton chief, hitherto opposed to the war, approached sufficiently near to converse with him. Red Plume told him to warn me that the plan was formed to invite me to a council, with some of my superior officers, to shoot us without ceremony, and then attack my command in great force, trusting to destroy the whole of it. The Indians ventured near the spot where a portion of my scouts had taken position, three or four hundred yards from our camp, and conversed with them in an apparently friendly manner, some of them professing a desire for peace. Surgeon Josiah S. Weiser, of the First regiment, Minnesota Mounted Rangers, incautiously joined the group of scouts, when a young savage, doubtless supposing, from his uniform and horse equipments, that he was an officer of rank, pretended great friendship and delight at seeing him, but when within a few feet treacherously shot him through the heart. The scouts discharged their pieces at the murderer, but he escaped, leaving his horse behind. The body of Dr. Weiser was immediately brought into camp, unmutilated, save by the ball that killed him. He was universally esteemed, being skillful in his profession, and a courteous gentleman. This outrage precipitated an immediate

engagement. The savages, in great numbers, concealed by the ridges, had encircled those portions of the camp not flanked by the lake referred to, and commenced an attack. Colonel [Samuel] McPhail, with two companies, subsequently reinforced by others, as they could be spared from other points, was directed to drive the enemy from the vicinity of the hill where Dr. Weiser was shot, while those companies of the Seventh regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel [W. R.] Marshall and Major [George] Bradley, and one company of the Tenth regiment, under Captain [Alonzo J.] Edgerton, were dispatched to support them. Taking with me a six-pounder, under the command of Lieutenant [John C.] Whipple, I ascended a hill toward the Big Mound, on the opposite side of the ravine, and opened fire with spherical case shot upon the Indians, who had obtained possession of the upper part of the large ravine, and of smaller ones tributary to it, under the protection of which they could annoy the infantry and cavalry without exposure on their part. This flank and raking fire of artillery drove them from their hiding places into the broken prairie, where they were successively dislodged from the ridges, being utterly unable to resist the steady advance of the Seventh regiment and the Rangers, but fled before them in confusion. While these events were occurring on the right, the left of the camp was also threatened by a formidable body of warriors. Colonel [William] Crooks, whose regiment (the Sixth) was posted on that side, was ordered to deploy part of his command as skirmishers, and to dislodge the enemy. This was gallantly done, the colonel directing in person the movements of one part of his detached force, and Lieutenant Colonel [John T.] Averill of the other, Major [Robert N.] McLaren remaining in command of that portion of the regiment required as part of the camp guard.

The savages were steadily driven from one strong position after another, under a severe fire, until, feeling their utter inability to contend longer with our soldiers in the open field, they joined their brethren in one common flight. Upon moving forward with my staff to a commanding point which overlooked the field, I discovered the whole body of Indians, numbering from 1,000 to 1,500, retiring in confusion from the combat, while a dark line of moving objects on the distant hills indicated the locality of their families. I immediately dispatched orders to Colonel McPhail, who had now received

an accession of force from the other companies of his mounted regiment, to press on with all expedition, and fall upon the rear of the enemy, but not to continue the pursuit after night-fall, and Lieutenant Colonel Marshall was directed to follow and support him with the company of the Seventh, and Captain Edgerton's company of the Tenth, accompanied by one six-pounder and one section of mountain howitzers, under Captain Jones. At the same time, all of the companies of the Sixth and Tenth regiments, except two from each, which were left as a camp guard, were ordered to rendezvous, and to proceed in the same direction, but they had so far to march from their respective points before arriving at the spot occupied by myself and staff, that I felt convinced of the uselessness of their proceeding farther, the other portions of the pursuing force being some miles in the advance, and I accordingly ordered their return to camp. The cavalry gallantly followed the Indians, and kept up a running fight until nearly dark, killing and wounding many of their warriors, the infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, being kept at a double-quick in the rear. The order to Colonel McPhail was improperly delivered, as requiring him to return to camp, instead of bivouacking on the prairie. Consequently he retraced his way, with his weary men and horses, followed by the still more wearied infantry, and arrived at camp early the next morning, as I was about to move forward with the main column. Thus ended the battle of the "Big Mound." The severity of the labors of the entire command may be appreciated when it is considered that the engagement only commenced after the day's march was nearly completed, and that the Indians were chased at least twelve miles, making altogether full forty miles performed without rest.

The march of the cavalry of the Seventh regiment, and of Company B of the Tenth regiment, in returning to camp after the tremendous efforts of the day, is almost unparalleled, and it told so fearfully upon men and animals that a forward movement could not take place until the twenty-sixth, when I marched at an early hour. Colonel [J. H.] Baker had been left in command of the camp (named by the officers Camp Sibley) during the engagement of the previous day, and all the arrangements for its security were actively and judiciously made, aided as he was by that excellent officer, Lieutenant Colonel [Samuel P.] Jennison, of the same regiment. Upon

arriving at the camp from which the Indians had been driven in such hot haste, vast quantities of dried meat, tallow, and buffalo robes, cooking utensils, and other indispensable articles, were found concealed in the long reeds around the lake, all of which were, by my directions, collected and burned. For miles along the route the prairie was strewn with like evidences of a hasty flight. Colonel McPhail had previously informed me that beyond Dead Buffalo lake, as far as his pursuit of the Indians had continued, I would find neither wood nor water. I consequently established my camp on the border of that lake, and very soon afterward parties of Indians made their appearance, threatening an attack. I directed Captain [John] Jones to repair with his section of six-pounders, supported by Captain [Jonathan] Chase, with his company of pioneers, to a commanding point about six hundred yards in advance, and I proceeded in person to the same point. I there found Colonel Crooks, who had taken position with two companies of his regiment, commanded by Captain [Grant] and Lieutenant Grant, to check the advance of the Indians in that quarter. An engagement ensued at long range, the Indians being too wary to attempt to close, although greatly superior in numbers. The spherical case from the six-pounders soon caused a hasty retreat from that locality, but, perceiving it to be their intention to make a flank movement on the left of the camp in force, Captain [Oscar] Taylor, with his company of Mounted Rangers, was dispatched to retard their progress in that quarter. He was attacked by the enemy in large numbers, but manfully held his ground until recalled and ordered to support Lieutenant Colonel Averill, who, with two companies of the Sixth regiment, deployed as skirmishers, had been ordered to hold the savages in check. The whole affair was ably conducted by these officers, but the increasing numbers of the Indians, who were well mounted, enabled them, by a circuitous route, to dash toward the extreme left of the camp, evidently with a view to stampede the mules herded on the shore of the lake. This daring attempt was frustrated by the rapid motions of the companies of Mounted Rangers, commanded by Captains [Eugene M.] Wilson and [Peter B.] Davy, who met the enemy and repulsed them with loss, while Major McLaren, with equal promptitude, threw out, along an extended line, the six companies of the Sixth regiment under his immediate command, thus entirely secur-

ing that flank of the camp from further attacks. The savages, again foiled in their design, fled with precipitation, leaving a number of their dead upon the prairie, and the battle of "Dead Buffalo Lake" was ended.

On the twenty-seventh, I resumed the march, following the trail of the retreating Indians, until I reached Stony lake, where the exhaustion of the animals required me to encamp, although grass was very scarce.

The next day, the twenty-eighth, there took place the greatest conflict between our troops and the Indians, so far as the numbers were concerned, which I have named the battle of "Stony Lake." Regularly alternating each day, the Tenth regiment, under Colonel Baker, was in the advance and leading the column, as the train toiled up the long hill. As I passed Colonel Baker, I directed him to deploy two companies of the Tenth as skirmishers. Part of the wagons were still in the camp, under the guard of the Seventh regiment, when I perceived a large force of mounted Indians moving rapidly upon us. I immediately sent orders to the several commands promptly to assume their positions, in accordance with the program of the line of march; but this was done, and the whole long train completely guarded at every point by the vigilant and able commanders of regiments and corps, before the orders reached them. The Tenth gallantly checked the advance of the enemy in front; the Sixth and cavalry on the right, and the Seventh and cavalry on the left, while the six-pounders and two sections of mountain howitzers, under the efficient direction of their respective chiefs, poured a rapid and destructive fire from as many different points. The vast number of the Indians enabled them to form two-thirds of a circle, five or six miles in extent, along the whole line of which they were seeking for some weak point upon which to precipitate themselves. The firing was incessant and rapid from each side; but as soon as I had completed the details of the designated order of march, and closed up the train, the column issued in line of battle upon the prairie, in the face of the immense force opposed to it, and I resumed my march without any delay. This proof of confidence in our own strength completely destroyed the hopes of the savages, and completed their discomfiture. With yells of disappointment and rage, they fired a few parting volleys, and then retreated with all expedition. It was not possible, with our jaded horses, to overtake their fleet and comparatively fresh ponies.

This engagement was the last desperate effort of the combined Dakota bands to prevent a farther advance on our part toward their families. It would be difficult to estimate the number of warriors, but no cool and dispassionate observer would probably have placed it at a less figure than from 2,200 to 2,500. No such concentration of force has, so far as my information extends, ever been made by the savages of the American continent. It is rendered certain, from information received from various sources, including that obtained from the savages themselves, in their conversations with our half-breed scouts, that the remnant of the bands who escaped with Little Crow had successively joined the Sissetons, the Cut-Heads, and finally the Ihank-ton-ais, the most powerful single band of the Dakotas, and, together with all these, had formed an enormous camp of nearly, or quite, 10,000 souls.

To assert that the courage and discipline displayed by officers and men in the successive engagements with this formidable and hitherto untried enemy were signally displayed would but ill express the admiration I feel for their perfect steadiness, and the alacrity with which they courted an encounter with the savage foe. No one for a moment seemed to doubt the result, however great the preponderance against us in numerical force. These wild warriors of the plains had never been met in battle by American troops, and they have ever boasted that no hostile army, however numerous, would dare to set foot upon the soil of which they claimed to be the undisputed masters. Now that they have been thus met, and their utmost force defied, resisted, and utterly broken and routed, the lesson will be a valuable one, not only in its effect upon these particular bands, but upon all the tribes of the Northwest.

When we went into camp on the banks of Apple river, a few mounted Indians could alone be seen. Early the next morning I dispatched Colonel McPhail, with the companies of the Mounted Rangers and the two six-pounders, to harass and retard the retreat of the Indians across the Missouri river, and followed with the main column as rapidly as possible. We reached the woods on the border of that stream shortly after noon on the twenty-ninth, but the Indians had crossed their families during the preceding night, and it took but a short time for the men to follow them on their ponies. The hills on the opposite side were covered with the men, and they had probably formed the determination to oppose our passage of



the river, both sides of which were here covered with a dense growth of underbrush and timber for a space of more than a mile. I dispatched Colonel Crooks with his regiment, which was in the advance, to clear the woods to the river of Indians, which he successfully accomplished without loss, although fired upon fiercely from the opposite side. He reported to me that a large quantity of transportation, including carts, wagons, and other vehicles, had been left behind in the woods. I transmitted, through Mr. Beever, a volunteer aid on my staff, an order to Colonel Crooks to return to the main column with his regiment, the object I had in view in detaching him being fully attained. The order was received, and Mr. Beever was intrusted with a message in return, containing information desired by me, when, on his way to headquarters, he unfortunately took the wrong trail, and was the next day found where he had been set upon and killed by an outlying party of the enemy. His death occasioned much regret to the command, for he was esteemed by all for his devotion to duty and for his modest and gentlemanly deportment. A private of the Sixth regiment, who had taken the same trail, was also shot to death with arrows, probably by the same party.

There being no water to be found on the prairie, I proceeded down the Missouri to the nearest point on Apple river, opposite Burnt Boat island, and made my camp. The following day Colonel Crooks, with a strong detachment of eleven companies of infantry and dismounted cavalry, and three guns, under the command of Captain Jones, was dispatched to destroy the property left in the woods, which was thoroughly performed, with the aid of Lieutenant Jones and a portion of the pioneer corps. From one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty wagons and carts were thus disposed of. During this time the savages lay concealed in the grass on the opposite side of the river, exchanging occasional volleys with our men. Some execution was done upon them by the long range arms of the infantry and cavalry, without injury to any one of my command.

I waited two days in camp, hoping to open communication with General Sully, who, with his comparatively fresh mounted force, could easily have followed up and destroyed the enemy we had so persistently hunted. The long and rapid marches had very much debilitated the infantry, and as for the horses of the cavalry and the mules employed in the trans-

portation, they were utterly exhausted. Under all the circumstances, I felt that this column had done everything possible within the limits of human and animal endurance, and that a farther pursuit would not only be useless, as the Indians could cross and recross the river in much less time than could my command, and thus evade me, but would necessarily be attended with the loss of many valuable lives. For three successive evenings I caused the cannon to be fired, and signal rockets sent up, but all these elicited no reply from General Sully, and I am apprehensive he has been detained by insurmountable obstacles. The point struck by me on the Missouri is about forty miles by land below Fort Clarke, in latitude  $46^{\circ} 42'$ , longitude  $100^{\circ} 35'$ .

The military results of the expedition have been highly satisfactory. A march of nearly six hundred miles from St. Paul has been made, in a season of fierce heats and unprecedented drought, when even the most experienced *voyageurs* predicted the impossibility of such a movement. A vigilant and powerful, as well as confident, enemy was found, successively routed in three different engagements, with a loss of at least one hundred and fifty killed and wounded of his best and bravest warriors, and his beaten forces driven in confusion and dismay, with the sacrifice of vast quantities of subsistence, clothing, and means of transportation, across the Missouri river, many, perhaps most of them, to perish miserably in their utter destitution during the coming fall and winter. These fierce warriors of the prairie have been taught, by dear-bought experience, that the long arm of the government can reach them in their most distant haunts, and punish them for their misdeeds; that they are utterly powerless to resist the attacks of a disciplined force, and that but for the interposition of a mighty stream between us and them, the utter destruction of a great camp containing all their strength was certain.

It would have been gratifying to us all if the murdering remnant of the Minday, Wakomton, and Wakpaton bands could have been extirpated, root and branch; but as it is, the bodies of many of the most guilty have been left unburied on the prairies, to be devoured by wolves and foxes.

I am gratified to be able to state that the loss sustained by my column in actual combat was very small. Three men of the cavalry were killed and four wounded, one, I fear, fatally. One private of the same regiment was killed by lightning dur-

ing the first engagement, and Lieutenant [Ambrose] Freeman of Company D, also of the Mounted Rangers, a valuable officer, was pierced to death with arrows on the same day by a party of hostile Indians, while, without my knowledge, he was engaged in hunting at a distance from the main column. The bodies of the dead were interred with funeral honors, and the graves secured from desecration by making them in the semblance of ordinary rifle-pits.

It would give me pleasure to designate by name all those of the splendid regiments and corps of my command who have signalized themselves by their gallant conduct, but as that would really embrace officers and men, I must content myself by bringing to the notice of the major general commanding such as came immediately under my own observation.

I cannot speak too highly of Colonels Crooks and Baker, and Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, commanding, respectively, the Sixth, Tenth, and Seventh regiments Minnesota Volunteers, and Lieutenant Colonels Averill and Jennison, and Majors McLaren and Bradley, and of the line officers and men of these regiments. They have deserved well of their country and of their state. They were ever on hand to assist me in my labors, and active, zealous, and brave in the performance of duty. Of Colonel McPhail, commanding the Mounted Rangers, and of Majors [John H.] Parker and [Orrin T.] Hayes, and the company officers and men generally, I have the honor to state that, as the cavalry was necessarily more exposed and nearer the enemy than the other portions of the command, so they alike distinguished themselves by unwavering courage and splendid fighting qualities. The great destruction dealt out to the Indians is mostly attributable to this branch of service, although many were killed and disabled by the artillery and infantry. Captain Jones and his officers and men of the battery were ever at their posts, and their pieces were served with much skill and effect. To Captain [Jonathan] Chase of the pioneers, and his invaluable company, the expedition has been greatly indebted for service in the peculiar line for which they are detailed.

Captain [William R.] Baxter's company (H) of the Ninth regiment, having been attached to the Tenth regiment, as a part of its organization, temporarily, upheld its high reputation for efficiency, being the equal in that regard of any other company.

The surgical department of the expedition was placed by me in the charge of Surgeon [Alfred] Wharton, as medical director, who has devoted himself zealously and efficiently to his duties. In his official report to these headquarters he accords due credit to the surgeons and assistants of the several regiments present with him.

Of the members of my own staff, I can affirm that they have been equal to the discharge of the arduous duties imposed on them. Captain [Rollin C.] Olin, my assistant adjutant general, has afforded me great assistance; and for their equal gallantry and zeal may be mentioned Captains Pope and Atchison, Lieutenants Pratt and Hawthorne, and Captain Cox, temporarily attached to my staff, his company having been left at Camp Atchison.

The quartermaster of the expedition, Captain Corning, and Captain Kimball, assistant quartermaster, in charge of the pioneer train, have discharged their laborious duties faithfully and satisfactorily; and for Captain Forbes, commissary of subsistence, I can bear witness that but for his activity, attention, and business capacity, the interests of the government would have suffered much more than they did, by the miserable state in which many of the packages containing subsistence stores were found.

Chief guides, Major J. R. Brown and Pierre Bottineau, have been of the greatest service, by their experience and knowledge of the country; and the interpreter, Rev. Mr. Riggs, has also rendered much assistance in the management of the Indian scouts. The scouts, generally, including the chiefs, McLeod and Duley, have made themselves very useful to the expedition, and have proved themselves faithful, intrepid, and intelligent.

I have the honor to transmit herewith the reports of Colonels Crooks, Baker, and Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, commanding, respectively, the Sixth, Tenth, and Seventh regiments of Minnesota Volunteers, and of Colonel McPhail, commanding First regiment Mounted Rangers.<sup>1</sup> I am, Major, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

MAJOR J. F. MELINE,

*Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Northwest.*

<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part I., pp. 352-359.

*Report of Colonel Samuel McPhail, First Minnesota Mounted Rangers.*

IN CAMP ON THE PLAINS, August 5, 1863.

GENERAL: On the twenty-fourth of July, 1863, pursuant to your order to recover the body of Dr. J. S. Weiser, surgeon First Minnesota Mounted Rangers, murdered by the Indians, I proceeded to the hills in rear of Camp Sibley, with Companies A and D of my regiment. When some five hundred yards from camp, we were fired upon by the Indians occupying the summit of the hill. I immediately ordered Company A, under Captain E. M. Wilson, to advance and fire upon the enemy, which was done in good style. The ground being rocky and broken, Companies A, D, and E were ordered to dismount and skirmish the hills, Companies B and F, under Major [O. T.] Hayes, and Company L, under Captain [P. B.] Davy, to support them. The First battalion, under Major [J. H.] Parker, cleared the hills and drove the Indians some two miles, followed by Companies B and F, mounted. Here I met Lieutenant Colonel W. R. Marshall, Seventh Minnesota Volunteers, and requested him to protect my right flank, which he did in gallant style. Major Parker was then ordered to rally the companies of his battalion and prepare to engage the enemy, mounted. I then moved forward of the skirmishers with Companies B and F, and ordered a charge upon the enemy posted on the highest peak of the range, known as the "Big Hills." This order was promptly obeyed, and the Indians dislodged from their position and driven toward the plains west of the hills. While descending the hills, I ordered another charge by Company B, under Captain [Horace] Austin. While in the act of carrying out this order, one man was instantly killed by lightning and another seriously injured. This occasioned a momentary confusion; order, however, was soon restored, and we pushed the enemy from their positions on the hills and in the ravines in our front to the plains below. I then ordered a rally. Companies A, B, F, and L assembled, and we pushed forward upon the Indians, who had taken refuge behind a few rude and hastily constructed intrenchments in their encampments, from which they were quickly dislodged, and a running fight commenced. At this juncture, Lieutenant [J. C.] Whipple, Third Minnesota Battery, reached us with one six-pounder, his horses entirely given out, in conse-

quence of which he could only give the fleeing enemy two shots, which apparently threw them in still greater confusion. I then again ordered the charge, which was kept up until we had reached at least fifteen miles from the first point of attack, and during which we drove them from their concealment in the rushes and wild rice of Dead Buffalo lake, by a well-directed volley from the deadly carbines, ran into their lines five times, continuing the fight till nearly dark, when Companies H, D, and G arrived, and I received your order to return to Camp Sibley, at the Big Hills; and some time having been consumed in collecting our wounded, and providing transportation for them, we attempted to return, and only succeeded in reaching camp at 5 A. M. on the morning of the twenty-fifth, having in the darkness been unable to preserve our course, and having been in the saddle twenty-four hours without guide, provisions, or water. The number of Indians engaged could not have been less than 1,000, and would doubtless reach 1,500 warriors. The losses of my regiment, including a skirmish on Sunday evening, the twenty-sixth, at Dead Buffalo lake, are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Dr. J. S. Weiser, surgeon, and Lieutenant A. Freeman, Company D, were murdered by the Indians.

The number of Indians known to have been killed by the Mounted Rangers is thirty-one, all found with the peculiar mark of cavalry upon them. Doubtless many more were killed by the Rangers, as the wounded concealed themselves in the marshes, where it was impossible to follow them with cavalry.

In this report I esteem it a duty, and it affords me great pleasure, to say of the officers and men under my command, who were engaged in this series of fights and hand-to-hand encounters, that, without exception, the utmost coolness and bravery was displayed, the only difficulty I encountered being that of restraining the wild enthusiasm of the troops during the succession of cavalry charges, and I can only say of them further that they have won for themselves a reputation of which veteran troops might well be proud.

It is also a duty and gratification to mention favorably the name of First Lieutenant [E. A.] Goodell, acting adjutant, whose aid in the hottest of the fight rendered me great service; also

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<sup>1</sup> Nominal list shows three men killed and four wounded.

the name of John Martin of Company F, who bore dispatches with certainty, celerity, and security.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

SAM. MCPHAIL,

*Colonel, Commanding Mounted Rangers.*

BRIGADIER GENERAL H. H. SIBLEY,

*Commanding Expeditionary Force.*

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*Report of Colonel William Crooks, Sixth Minnesota Infantry.*

CAMP WILLISTON, DAKOTA, August 5, 1863.

SIR: Pursuant to order of Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, this regiment reported at Camp Pope, Minnesota, for service in the expedition directed against the Sioux Indians. The march was taken up early on the morning of the sixteenth, and on the twenty-sixth day of June the forces encamped at the foot of Lake Traverse, a distance of one hundred and nineteen miles from Camp Pope. From this point a train was dispatched to Fort Abercrombie for supplies, the guard consisting of three companies of infantry, including Company H of the Sixth regiment, Captain [W. K.] Tattersall, one battalion of cavalry, Major [J. H.] Parker commanding, and one section of artillery, the whole under command of Lieutenant Colonel [J. T.] Averill of this regiment. The brigade left Lake Traverse on the thirtieth of June, and reached the first crossing of the Cheyenne river on the evening of the fourth of July, distant from the foot of Lake Traverse seventy-four miles. At this point, called Camp Hayes, the command laid over six days, awaiting the arrival of the supply train from Fort Abercrombie. The train arrived on the ninth of July, and the expedition resumed the line of march on the morning of the eleventh. From this point to the second crossing of the Cheyenne, where we arrived on the seventeenth, the distance was eighty-three miles.

On the morning of the eighteenth, we resumed the march, and made Camp Atchison, on Lake Emily, the day's march being twelve miles. At this point I was directed to lay out an intrenched camp, and a force was selected from the several regiments to hold the same, with a view to disembarassing the active force of all men unable to march, and of all supplies

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 359, 360.



not actually necessary in a more rapid pursuit of the enemy. Companies G and C of my regiment were designated by me as part of the garrison, together with invalids from all other companies.

Having put the command in light marching order, on the morning of the twentieth of July, with twenty-five days' rations, the command again commenced, with renewed energy, the pursuit of the Sioux; and at noon on the twenty-fourth, at a distance of seventy-eight miles from Camp Atchison, a shout from the advance told that our pursuit had not been in vain. The savages lined the crests of the surrounding hills, covering their camp some five miles to the southwest. By direction of the general, the Sixth regiment, together with Company M of the Mounted Rangers, under command of Lieutenant [D. B.] Johnson, and a section of artillery, under command of Lieutenant [H. H.] Western, occupied the east front, and threw up earthworks, supporting the guns. About this time Surgeon Weiser of the Mounted Rangers, in company with others, rode up the heights and engaged in conversation with the Indians, who, true to their proverbial treachery, pierced his manly heart at the moment he offered them bread. Observing this act, I at once deployed Companies E, I, and K well to the front, and with Company E, under command of Captain [Rudolph] Schoeneman, together with Captain [Jonathan] Chase's company (A) of the Ninth regiment, on Schoeneman's left, supported by Captains [T. S.] Slaughter and [W. W.] Braden, drove the savages for three miles, and prevented their turning our left.

Lieutenant Colonel Averill was directed by me to advance three companies to support the extreme left, where a strong demonstration was being made, Major McLaren remaining in command of the reserve and camp.

The movements were well and regularly made, the officers and men displaying those traits of most consequence to soldiers. My advance was checked by an order to draw in my lines to the lines of the skirmishers of the other regiments to my right, and to report in person to the brigadier general commanding. Having turned the command over to Lieutenant Colonel Averill, with instructions to draw in his men, I reported to General Sibley, and, in conformity with his orders, I dispatched a messenger to Major McLaren to come forward, with all haste, with five companies, to the support of the

Mounted Rangers, who were driving the Indians on toward their camp, at the moment supported by the Seventh infantry and Captain A. J. Edgerton's company of the Tenth. The major came forward at a double-quick with Companies A, B, D, I, and K, and reported to me some four miles in the advance, where General Sibley was awaiting the advance of reinforcements. I immediately reported to the general the arrival of my men, and soon thereafter was ordered to return to camp.

The next day the camp was moved some four miles, in order to recruit the animals, and the command rested until Sunday morning, the twenty-sixth of July, when the march was resumed, and, having marched fourteen miles, the Sixth regiment leading, the Indians again assembled for battle. The regiment at once deployed skirmishers, and advanced steadily, driving the Indians, Lieutenant Colonel Averill, with marked coolness and judgment, commanding the extended line of skirmishers, while the reserve, under McLaren, was but too eager to engage. At 2 P. M., General Sibley coming to the extreme front, and observing the state of affairs, pushed the cavalry to our right, with a view to massing the Indians in front; also ordering Captain [John] Jones forward with the field pieces. Major McLaren was now ordered to take the reserve to camp, one and one-half miles to the rear, the front being held by three companies of the Sixth and Company A of the Ninth, the whole supporting Lieutenant [J. C.] Whipple with his section of the battery.

The Indians observing McLaren's movement, having made a feint to the left, made a desperate attack upon the north front, with a view to destroying our transportation; but the major had his men well in hand, and, throwing them rapidly on the enemy, completely foiled this their last move, and the savages, giving a parting volley, typical of their rage and disappointment, left a field where heavy loss and defeat but retold their doom.

Too much praise cannot be awarded Captain Oscar Taylor of the Mounted Rangers, who chafed for an order to advance, and who bore his part nobly when that order was finally given. His horses being exhausted, this officer dismounted his men, and, as skirmishers, added their strength to that of Company A, Sixth regiment, where, under the immediate eye of Colonel Averill, they did splendid service. Lieutenant

Whipple, in direct charge of the guns, was, as usual, cool and efficient; and Captain Jones had but another opportunity of congratulating himself upon the efficiency of his battery.

The march was resumed on the morning of the twenty-seventh, and in the afternoon we camped on Stony lake, having marched eighteen miles. No demonstrations were made by the Indians during the night; but as the column was forming on the morning of the twenty-eighth, and the transportation was somewhat scattered, the wily foe saw his opportunity, and, to the number of 2,000 mounted men, at least, made a most daring charge upon us. The Sixth regiment holding the centre of the column, and being upon the north side of the lake, Lieutenant Colonel Averill commenced deploying the right wing, and having deployed strongly from my left, so as to hold the lake, the advance was ordered. The men went boldly forward and worked splendidly, Lieutenant Colonel Averill displaying much judgment in an oblique formation to cover a threatened movement on my right by the Indians in great force, who, whooping and yelling, charged our lines. The consequences must have proven destructive in the extreme had the lake and flanks not been stiffly held. The savages were driven back, reeling under their repulse, and the general commanding coolly and determinedly formed his column of march in face of the attack, the object of which was manifold: First, to destroy our transportation, and, second, to delay our advance, allowing their families more time to escape.

No time was lost; the column moved on, and by 9 A. M. our advance saw the masses of the retreating foe. The pursuit was continued until late, when we camped on Apple river. Men and horses were not in a condition to pursue that night, but early on the morning of the twenty-ninth, with the regiment in the advance, pursuit was commenced, and, after marching six miles and overcoming a rise of ground, our eyes first beheld the timber on the Missouri river, distant nine miles.

General Sibley had with much forethought, early that morning, dispatched Colonel McPhail and his regiment, with Captain Jones and his field pieces, to the front, with the view of intercepting the savages ere they crossed the river. Rapidly McPhail pushed forward, but the Indians' rear was covered by a dense forest and a tangle of prickly ash and thorn

bushes, almost impenetrable: Our advance was soon up, and by order of the general, the Sixth regiment was ordered to scour the woods to the river, and ascertain the exact position of the enemy. I deployed Companies D, I, and K, commanded by Captains [J. C.] Whitney, Slaughter, and Braden, as skirmishers, under the command of Major McLaren, while the five other companies, under Colonel Averill, were held as a reserve. Captain Jones accompanied me, with Whipple's and Western's sections of his battery. We advanced slowly but surely, shelling the woods in my advance, and we reached the river to find the enemy just crossed, after abandoning all their transportation, and losing many of their women and children, drowned in their hasty flight. Lieutenant Colonel Averill, with the reserve, received the fire of an enemy in large numbers, concealed in the tall rushes across the river, and returned it with spirit; but an order having reached me to return, a retrograde movement was made.

Just prior to the fire of Colonel Averill's reserve, Lieutenant F. J. H. Beaver, an English gentleman, of qualities worthy of the best, a fellow of Oxford University, and a volunteer aid to the general, rode up alone and delivered the order to return. I wrote a short dispatch, and directed him to return at once, as my communication might prove of much value to the general. All being accomplished that was desired, the regiment returned, and joined the camp near the mouth of Apple river, with the loss of N. Miller of Company K. On my return to camp, I learned that Beaver had never reported, and we had just grounds to believe him lost. Guns were fired and rockets sent up, but our friend did not return.

At noon on the thirtieth of July, a detachment, consisting of Companies A, I, and K of the Sixth regiment, commanded by Captains [Hiram P.] Grant, Slaughter, and Braden; A, B, and H of the Seventh, commanded by Captains [J. K.] Arnold, [James] Gilfillan, and [A. H.] Stevens, and B, F, and K of the Tenth infantry, commanded by Captains [A. J.] Edgerton, [G. T.] White, and [M. J.] O'Connor, and Companies L and M of the cavalry, commanded by Captain [P. B.] Davy and Lieutenant [D. B.] Johnson, Lieutenants Whipple's and Dwelle's sections of the battery, together with a detachment of Company A, Ninth regiment of infantry, as pioneers, under Lieutenant [Harrison] Jones, the whole under my command, was ordered to proceed to the place where I had been

the day before, with directions to destroy the transportation left by the Indians, and to find the body of Lieutenant Beaver, and that of Private Miller, if dead, and engage the savages, if the opportunity presented. Lieutenant Colonel [S. P.] Jen- nison of the Tenth infantry, Major [R. N.] McLaren of the Sixth, and Major [George] Bradley of the Seventh, com- manded the detachments of the respective regiments. All the objects contemplated were fully accomplished.

It was apparent that Lieutenant Beaver, on his way back with my dispatch, became embarrassed by the many trails left by an alarmed and conquered enemy, lost his way, and, after bravely confronting a large party of savages and deal- ing death into their ranks, had fallen, pierced with arrows and bullets, his favorite horse lying dead near him. He was buried in the trenches with the honor due his rank, and every heart beat in sympathy with the family of this brave stranger, as we retraced our steps toward the boundary of our own state.

I take pleasure in mentioning the services of Surgeon and Acting Medical Director [Alfred] Wharton, and of Assistant Surgeons Daniels and Potter, for duties performed whenever they were needed in and out of the regiment; also to Lieuten- ants Carver and [F. E.] Snow for assistance fearlessly rendered in the field. Lieutenant Colonel Averill and Major McLaren have proven themselves worthy of the regiment.

For the officers of the line and men, I proudly say that they did all that they were ordered to do with an alacrity and a spirit which promises well for the future.

I make the distance from Fort Snelling to the Missouri, by our line of march, five hundred and eighty-five miles.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honor to remain, Captain, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant, WM. CROOKS,

*Colonel, Commanding Sixth Minnesota Infantry.*

CAPTAIN R. C. OLIN, *Assistant Adjutant General.*

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*Reports of Lieutenant Colonel William R. Marshall, Seventh Min-  
nesota Infantry.*

HDQRS. SEVENTH REGIMENT MINNESOTA VOLUNTEERS,

CAMP SIBLEY, ON MISSOURI COTEAU, July 25, 1863.

CAPTAIN: I respectfully submit the following report of the part taken by the Seventh regiment (eight companies) in the engagement with the Indians yesterday:

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 361-364.

Immediately after news was received of the presence of Indians, the regiment was formed in order of battle on the line designated by you for the protection of the corral—subsequently the camp—then being formed. A detail of ten men from each company was set to digging trenches in front of our line, which fronted a little south of east, the Big Mound being directly east. The men remained upon the color line until the firing commenced on the foothill directly in front, where Dr. Weiser was killed. I was then ordered to deploy Captain [Rolla] Banks' company, armed with Colt's rifles, along the foothill to the left of the ravine that opened toward the Big Mound. This done, Major Bradley was ordered with two companies, Captains Gilfillan and Stevens, to the support of the first battalion of cavalry, then out on the right of the ravine, where Dr. Weiser was shot. Major Bradley's detachment became engaged along with the cavalry. As soon as he reached the top of the first range of hills, I asked to advance to their support with the other five companies, and received your order to do so. With Captains Kennedy's, Williston's, Hall's, Carter's, and Arnold's companies, leaving Captain Carter in charge of the detail to finish the trenches and protect camp, I advanced at double-quick up the ravine toward the Big Mound. When opposite the six-pounder on the left of the ravine, where the general then was, I deployed the five companies at three paces intervals, without any reserve. The line extended from hill to hill, across the ravine, which was here irregular or closed. Advancing as rapidly as possible, the line first came under fire when it reached the crest of the first range of hills, below the summit peaks. The Indians then occupied the summit range, giving way from the highest peak, or Big Mound, driven by the fire of the six-pounder, but in great numbers along the ridge southward. Captain Eugene Wilson's company of cavalry, dismounted, passed to my left, and occupied the Big Mound, while I charged across the little valley, and up to the summit south of the mound. We advanced, firing, the Indians giving way as we advanced. I crossed the ridge and pursued the Indians out on the comparatively open ground east of the peaks. Their main body, however, was to our right, ready to dispute possession of the rocky ridges and ravines into which the summit range is broken in its continuation southward. I had flanked them, turning their right, and now gradually wheeled my line to the

right until it was perpendicular to the range, my left being well out on the open ground, over which the enemy's extreme right was retreating. I thus swept southward, and, as the open ground was cleared,—the Indians in that direction making to the hills two miles southeast, just beyond which was their camp, as we afterward discovered,—I wheeled still more to the right, directing my attention to the summit range again, where the Indians were the thickest. Advancing rapidly and firing, they soon broke, and as I reached and recrossed the ridge they were flying precipitately and in great numbers from the ravines, which partly covered them, down toward the great plain, at the southern termination of the range of hills.

Colonel McPhail, who, with a part of the cavalry, had crossed to the east side of the range, and kept in line in my rear, ready to charge upon the Indians when they should be dislodged from the broken ground, now passed my line and pursued the enemy out on the open plain. After I recrossed the range, I met Major Bradley, and united the seven companies. He, in conjunction with Captains Taylor's and Anderson's companies of the cavalry, dismounted, had performed much the same service on the west slope of the range of hills that I had done on the east and summit, driving the enemy from hill to hill southward, a distance of four or five miles from camp to the termination of the range.

Happily no casualties happened in my command. Indeed, the Indians from the first encounter gave way, seeming to realize the superior range of our guns, yielding ridge after ridge and ravine after ravine, as we occupied successive ridges from which our fire reached them. The hat of one soldier and the musket stock of another gave proof of shots received; and other like evidences, and their balls occasionally kicking the dust up about us, and more rarely whistling past us, were the most sensible evidences of our being under fire.

The Indians were in far greater numbers than I had seen them before, certainly three times the number encountered at the relief of Birch Coolie, afterward ascertained to be 350, and more than double the number seen at Wood lake. I judged there were from 1,000 to 1,500. Their numbers were more apparent after we had combed them out of the hills into the plain below.

After uniting the battalion at the southern termination of



the great hills, I received orders to follow on, in support of the cavalry and artillery. The men were suffering greatly for water, and I marched them to a lake on the right, which proved to be salty. I then followed on after the cavalry. We passed one or more lakes that were alkaline. It was the experience of the ancient mariner:

Water, water everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.

We continued the march until nine o'clock at night, reaching a point twelve or fifteen miles from camp. The men had been on their feet since four o'clock in the morning; had double-quickened it five miles during the engagement; had been without food since morning, and without water since noon. They were completely exhausted, and I ordered a bivouac.

The trail was strewn with buffalo skins, dried meat, and other effects abandoned by the Indians in their wild flight. The men gathered meat and ate it for supper, and the skins for beds and covering. At this point, Captain Edgerton's company of the Tenth regiment joined us, and shared the night's hardships. We had posted guard and lain an hour, when Colonel McPhail returned from pursuing the Indians. He urged that I should return with him to camp.

The men were somewhat rested, and their thirst stimulated them to the effort. We joined him, and started to return to camp. About midnight we got a little dirty water from the marshy lake where the Indians had been encamped. We reached camp at daylight, having marched nearly twenty-four hours, and over a distance estimated at from forty to forty-five miles. •

My thanks are due to Major Bradley and the line officers for steady coolness and the faithful discharge of every duty, and to every man of the rank and file for good conduct throughout. The patient endurance of the long privation of water, and the fatigue of the weary night march, in returning to camp, after such a day, abundantly prove them to be such stuff as true soldiers are made of.<sup>1</sup> Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

WM. R. MARSHALL,

*Lieutenant Colonel, Comdg. Seventh Regiment Minnesota Vols.*

CAPTAIN R. C. OLIN, *Assistant Adjutant General.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 364-366.

**HDQRS. SEVENTH REGIMENT MINNESOTA VOLUNTEERS,  
CAMP WILLISTON, ON MISSOURI COTEAU, August 5, 1863.**

**CAPTAIN:** I respectfully submit the following report of the part taken by the Seventh regiment in the pursuit of, and engagements with, the Indians subsequent to the battle of the Big Mound, on the twenty-fourth ultimo:

In my report of the twenty-fifth of July, I detailed the movements of this regiment in that engagement. On Sunday, the twenty-sixth of July, when the column was halted at the Dead Buffalo lake and the Indians made a demonstration in front, I was with the right wing of my regiment, on the right flank of the train; Major [George] Bradley was with the left wing, on the left, the regiment being in the middle of the column in the order of march. Leaving Major Bradley to protect the left flank, I deployed Company B, Captain [A. H.] Stevens, obliquely forward to the right. He advanced farther than I intended, and did not halt until on the right of, and even with, the line of skirmishers of the Sixth regiment, then in the extreme advance. Thinking it better not to recall him, I advanced the three other companies of the right wing (Captains [James] Gilfillan's, [John] Kennedy's, and [T. G.] Carter's) near enough to support Company B, and at the same time protect the right of the train, which was then well closed up on the site of our camp. I remained in this position, without the Indians approaching within range, until orders were given to go into camp. I had but just dismissed the battalion from the color line to pitch tents, when the bold attack of the mounted Indians was made on the teams and animals, in the meadow on the north side of the camp. My line was on the south side of the camp. I assembled and re-formed the line, awaiting an attack from the south; but the Indians that appeared on that side quickly withdrew, after they saw the repulse on the north side, not coming within gun-shot range.

I cannot withhold an expression of my admiration of the gallant style in which the companies of cavalry (I believe Captains Wilson's and Davy's, the latter under Lieutenant [L. S.] Kidder) dashed out to meet the audacious devils, that were very nearly successful in gobbling up the teams and loose animals, that being their object. The Rangers, putting their horses upon the run, were but a few seconds in reaching the Indians, whose quick right-about did not save them from

the carbine and pistol shots and saber strokes, that told so well. I also saw and admired the promptitude with which Major McLaren, with a part of the Sixth regiment, moved from his color line on that side of camp to the support of the cavalry.

On the morning of the twenty-eighth of July, at Stony lake, the Seventh regiment, in the order of march, was in the rear. The rear of the wagon train was just filing out of camp, going around the south end of the lake, a part still within the camp ground, which extended almost to the end of the lake, my regiment being in line, waiting for the train to get out, when the alarm was given. Quickly the Indians appeared south of the lake, and circled around to the rear. I promptly advanced the right wing on the flank of the train, south of the lake, deploying Captains Gilfillan's and Stevens' companies as skirmishers. With these and Captains Kennedy's and Carter's companies in reserve, I immediately occupied the broken, rocky ground south of the lake: but not any too soon, for the Indians had entered it at the outer edge, not over five hundred yards from the train. Lieutenant [H. H.] Western of the battery, was in the rear, and promptly reported to me. I placed his section of the battery (two mountain howitzers) on the first elevation of the broken ground, outside the train. The fire of my line of skirmishers, then somewhat advanced on the right of the howitzers, and a few well-directed shots from Lieutenant Western's guns, discouraged the Indians from attempting to avail themselves of the cover of the small hills near us, dislodged the few that had got in, and drove the whole of them in that quarter to a very respectful distance, quite out of range. One shot from the Indians struck the ground near my feet, while I was locating the howitzers.

While I was thus occupied, Major Bradley, with the left wing (Captains Banks', Williston's, Hall's, and Arnold's companies), advanced out upon my left so as to cover the portion of the train still in camp from the threatened attack from the rear. There was a battalion of cavalry also protecting the rear to the left of Major Bradley. We thus formed a line from the left flank of the train around to the rear that effectually protected it. The Indians galloped back and forth just outside the range of the howitzers and our rifles of almost equal range, until the order came to close up the train and continue the march. As the rear of the train passed the lake, I took

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the right wing to the right flank of the train, near the rear, marched left in front, and so deployed as to well cover that portion of the train. Major Bradley, with the left wing, did similarly on the left flank. As the column moved forward the Indians withdrew out of sight.

On the twenty-ninth instant, when the column arrived at the Missouri river, the Seventh regiment was the second in order of march, and was held on the flanks of the train, while the Sixth regiment, which was in the advance, penetrated the woods to the river. By order of the general, Companies B and H were advanced as skirmishers, obliquely to the right of the head of train, to explore for water. They had entered the woods but a little way when recalled by an aid of the general.

On the thirtieth instant, Companies A, B, and H, Captains Arnold, Stevens, and Gilfillan, were detailed, under Major Bradley, to form part of the force under command of Colonel Crooks to again penetrate to the river, to destroy the wagons and other property of the Indians on the bank, and to search for the bodies of Lieutenant Beaver and Private Miller of the Sixth regiment. (I prepared to accompany the detachments, but the general objected to both the field officers of the regiment leaving camp at the same time.) Major Bradley, with the companies named, participated in the successful execution of the duty assigned Colonel Crooks.

On the night of the thirty-first of July, at our camp on the Missouri, I was at expedition headquarters, when the general was advised of hostile Indians having been heard signaling to one another around the camp. I returned to my regiment, and had two companies placed in the trenches. Subsequently, while I was lying down, Major Bradley received instructions to place the entire regiment along the front and flank of our part of the camp. This was done. Major Bradley remained up the entire night. I slept a part of the night; I was up, however, about two o'clock, when the Indians fired the volley into the north side of the camp—that occupied by the Tenth regiment. The volley was evidently aimed too high for effect in the tents or on the men in the trenches. That side of the corral was open for passing the animals in and out, and some of the shots must have struck the cattle, in addition to the horses and mules killed. The cattle dashed out of the corral utterly wild with fright, and making the ground tremble.

They were turned back and to the right by part of the line of the Tenth regiment. They then came plunging toward the left companies of my regiment. These rose up and succeeded in turning them back into the corral. It was providential that the camp was so encircled by the lines of the several regiments. But for the living wall that confronted them, the animals would have escaped or stampeded the mules and horses, with great destruction of life in the camp. I think it was the only time I have felt alarmed or startled. The prompt return of the fire of the Indians by the companies of the Tenth, on my left, discouraged any further attempt on the camp.

The next morning we resumed the march homeward. Since then no Indians have appeared, and nothing relating to this regiment occurred to add to the above.

In concluding this report, supplementary to that made on the twenty-fifth ultimo, I beg to add a few things of a more general nature, relating to the regiment I have the honor to command.

The health of the regiment during the long march from Camp Pope has been remarkably good. There have been but two cases of severe illness, both convalescent. Surgeon [L. B.] Smith and Assistant Surgeon [A. A.] Ames have been assiduous and skillful in their attention to the medical wants and to the general sanitary condition of the regiment. My highest acknowledgments are due and tendered to them. Adjutant [E. A.] Trader and Quartermaster [Ammi] Cutler have been laborious and efficient. During the first three weeks of the march, Lieutenant F. H. Pratt was acting quartermaster, and gave the highest satisfaction in the discharge of his duties. Chaplain [O. P.] Light, who remained at Camp Atchison, has been faithful in his ministrations. The non-commissioned staff has been every way efficient. The good order and discipline of the regiment have been perfect; but two or three arrests have been made, and those for trivial offenses.

I feel it due to Major Bradley to again refer to him in acknowledgment of the assistance he has constantly rendered me. Soon after the march began, I became so afflicted with irritation of the throat from dust that the surgeon forbade my giving commands to the battalion. Major Bradley has relieved me almost entirely in this respect, and has otherwise shared with me fully the responsibilities of the command.

Grateful to the Divine Providence that has guided and protected us, I am, Captain, very respectfully,<sup>1</sup>

Your Obedient Servant,

WM. R. MARSHALL,

*Lieutenant Colonel, Comdg. Seventh Regt. Minnesota Infantry.*

CAPTAIN R. C. OLIN, *Assistant Adjutant General.*

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*Report of Colonel James H. Baker, Tenth Minnesota Infantry.*

HDQRS. TENTH REGIMENT MINNESOTA INFANTRY,

CAMP WILLISTON, August 5, 1863.

CAPTAIN: I have the honor herewith to submit a report of such part as was borne by my regiment, or any portion of it, in the several actions from July 24th, at Big Mound, to the Missouri river.

About 3:30 o'clock on Friday, the twenty-fourth of July, while on the march, doing escort duty in the centre, I received information from the general commanding that a large force of Indians was immediately in our front, accompanied by an order communicated by Lieutenant Beaver to prepare my regiment for action, which order was immediately executed. Meantime the train was being corraled on the side of the lake; after which I received orders to form my regiment on the color line indicated for it, immediately in front of the corral, and fronting outward from the lake, and to throw up intrenchments along the line, which was speedily done. The action of this day began on my right, more immediately in front of the Seventh (which regiment, being in advance during the day's march, was entitled to the forward position), by the artillery under Captain Jones, when, at 4:30 P. M., I received an order by Captain Olin to deploy a company to support this battery. I immediately deployed Company B, Captain Edgerton, and that company, though fatigued already with an ordinary day's march, continued with the battery (marching for many miles on the double-quick) during the entire pursuit of the enemy, for fifteen miles, and throughout the night till sunrise next morning, when they returned from the pursuit to camp, having made during the day and night the almost unparalleled march of quite fifty miles.

At about five o'clock I received an order by Captain Pope to send Lieutenant Colonel Jennison with four companies, to

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 366-369.

be deployed and to follow in the direction of the retreating enemy, as a support for the cavalry and artillery. Colonel Jennison moved forward, with Companies A, F, C, and K, five miles, more than half of it on the double-quick, and reported his command to the general commanding, at that time in the front. After resting about one hour, by the order of the general commanding, Colonel Jennison was directed to return to camp with his force, and arrived at a little after 9 P. M. At the same time that the first order above alluded to was given, I was directed to assume command of the camp, and make the proper dispositions for its defense, which I did by completing all the intrenchments and organizing and posting such forces as were yet left in camp, not anticipating the return of our forces that night.

The action of the twenty-sixth of July took place on the side of the camp opposite from my regiment, and, consequently, we did not participate in it. We were, however, constantly under arms, ready at any moment for orders or an opportunity.

On Tuesday, the twenty-eighth of July, my regiment being in the advance for the day's march, we started out of Camp Ambler at five o'clock in the morning. The general commanding, some of the scouts, and a few of the headquarters wagons had preceded my regiment out of camp, and were ascending the long sloping hill which gradually rose from Stony lake. I had just received, directly from the general commanding, orders for the disposition of my regiment during the day's march, when the scouts came from over the hill on the full run, shouting, "They are coming! they are coming!" Immediately a very large body of mounted Indians began to make their appearance over the brow of the hill, and directly in front of my advancing column. I instantly gave the necessary orders for the deployment of the regiment to the right and left, which, with the assistance of Lieutenant Colonel Jennison and the great alacrity of commandants of companies, were executed with the utmost rapidity, though a portion of my line was thrown into momentary confusion by the hasty passage through it of the returning scouts and advance wagons. At this moment an Indian on the brow of the hill shouted, "We are too late; they are ready for us." Another one replied, "But remember our children and families; we must not let them get them." Immediately the Indians, all well mounted, filed off right and



left along the hill in my front with the utmost rapidity. My whole regiment was deployed, but the Indians covered my entire front, and soon far outflanked on both sides, appearing in numbers that seemed almost incredible, and most seriously threatening the train to the right and left of my widely extended line. The position of the train was at this moment eminently critical. It had begun to pass out of the corral around both ends of the small lake, to mass itself in the rear of my regiment, in the usual order of march. The other regiments were not yet in position, as the time to take their respective places in the order of march had not arrived. Fortunately, however, Captain Jones had early moved out of camp with one section of artillery, and was in the centre of my left wing, and Lieutenant Whipple, with another, near to the centre of my right, which was acting under Colonel Jen-nison.

Simultaneously with the deployment of the regiment, we began a steady advance of the whole line up the hill upon the foe, trusting to the speedy deployment of the other infantry regiments and the cavalry for the protection of the train, so threatened on either flank at the ends of the lake. My whole line was advancing splendidly up the hill, directly upon the enemy, the artillery doing fine work, and the musketry beginning to do execution, when I received a peremptory order to halt the entire line, as a farther advance would imperil the train. So ardent were both officers and men for the advance, that it was with some considerable difficulty that I could effect a halt. Believing fully that the great engagement of the expedition was now begun, and seeing in my front and reaching far beyond either flank more than double the number of Indians that had hitherto made their appearance, I took advantage of the halt to make every preparation for a prolonged and determined action. Meantime long-range firing continued throughout the entire line, and frequently the balls of the enemy would reach to, and even pass over, my men, though it was evident that the range of the Indian guns bore no comparison to ours. About this time I twice received the order to cause the firing to cease, which order I found very difficult to execute, owing to the wide extent of my line and intense eagerness of the men. I then received orders that, as the train was closed up, I should form my regiment in order of battle, deploy as skirmishers, holding two companies in re-

serve, and that, thus advancing, our order of march would be resumed in the face of the enemy. In a few minutes, the dispositions being made, all was ready, and, in the order of battle indicated, we passed the hill and found that the enemy had fled. We saw them but once again for a moment, on a distant hill, in great numbers, when they entirely disappeared. My regiment marched in deployed order of battle *en échelon* at the head of the column for eighteen miles, expecting and ready to meet the enemy at any moment.

The number of Indians so suddenly charging upon us was estimated at not less than from 1,500 to 2,000. They were well mounted and moved about with the utmost rapidity and with their characteristic hideous yells. The artillery, under Captain Jones and Lieutenant Whipple, did great execution, as I could well observe, and the fire of my men did effective service, and enabled us to hold the enemy at bay till the train was closed up and the regular dispositions for its defense made. At least three of the enemy were seen to fall by the fire from my line, their bodies being thrown on ponies and rapidly carried away. The artillery must have killed and wounded a considerable number. Nothing could exceed the eagerness, firmness, and gallant bearing of all the officers and men of my command during this unexpected, and, by far, numerically, the greatest effort the Indians had yet made upon the forces of the expedition. In their courage and earnest desire to clear the enemy from the hill by a double-quick charge, my officers and men were a unit. Nothing but the immediate peril of the train could induce them to cease the advance they had so gallantly begun.

On the thirtieth of July, while at Camp Slaughter, on the Missouri, I received an order to send three companies of my regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Jennison, to join an expedition under Colonel Crooks, the object of which was to skirmish through the timber and heavy underbrush to the river, and destroy the property of the Indians known to be upon its banks. This most laborious task was assigned to Companies B, F, and K, and a portion of Company C. A report of their operations will, of course, be given you by the officer commanding the expedition.

I desire, Captain, to avail myself of this opportunity to express my sincere gratification at the good order, faithful devotion to every duty, most determined perseverance in the

long and weary marches, uncomplaining in the severe guard and trenching labors, submitting uncomplainingly to every fatigue, which has characterized the officers and men of my regiment during the tedious and arduous march we have made to the distant shores of the Missouri river. It is with justifiable pride that I here note how nobly they have performed all that has been required at their hands.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honor to be, Captain, very respectfully,  
Your Obedient Servant,

J. H. BAKER,

*Colonel Tenth Regiment Minnesota Infantry.*

CAPTAIN R. C. OLIN,

*Assistant Adjutant General, District of Minnesota.*

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HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,

ST. PAUL, August 12, 1863—8:15 P. M.

*Major General Pope:*

On the night of the twenty-third instant, General Sibley was four miles from Missouri Coteau, on the Indian trail. The Indian killed was Little Crow. His son, with him at the time, was captured at Devil's lake by a detachment of troops left behind by General Sibley. He was the only Indian around there. A straggling Sioux tells our scouts that they will fight General Sibley. He reports the General near Long lake, and General Sully in the vicinity. He says that Standing Buffalo and Sweet Corn have left the main body.<sup>2</sup>

S. MILLER,

*Colonel, Commanding.*

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MILWAUKEE, August 14, 1863.

*Major General Halleck:*

The following dispatch from General Sibley, dated August 7th, just received:

We have had three desperate engagements with 2,200 Sioux warriors, in each of which they were routed and finally driven across the Missouri river, with the loss of all their subsistence, wagons, etc. Our loss has been small, while at least one hundred and fifty of the savages have been killed and wounded. Forty-six bodies have been found.

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General.*

General Sully marched from Fort Pierre for the Big Bend of Missouri river on the twentieth July, with 1,200 cavalry

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 869-872.

<sup>2</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part II., p. 449.

and a battery. Will doubtless intercept the flying Sioux before they can cross the river. Indian hostilities east of Missouri river may be considered ended.<sup>1</sup>

JNO. POPE,  
*Major General.*

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HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,  
ST. PAUL, August 15, 1863-10 A. M.

*Major General John Pope, Milwaukee:*

General Sibley's point on the Missouri river was forty miles by land below Fort Clark. Says if General Sully comes up soon, he will entirely destroy the Indians. For three nights he fired artillery and sent up signal rockets, but received no response from General Sully. Major Selfridge starts with your dispatch to-day.<sup>2</sup>

S. MILLER,  
*Colonel, Commanding.*

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HDQRS. DIST. OF MINNESOTA, DEPT. OF THE NORTHWEST,  
*In the Field, sixty miles west of Fort Abercrombie,*  
CAMP STEVENS, August 16, 1863.

MAJOR: My last dispatch of the seventh instant from Camp Carter contained a report of my operations against the hostile Sioux, and of their complete discomfiture in three separate engagements, and their hurried flight across the Missouri river, with the loss of large quantities of provisions, clothing, and other indispensable articles. So severely were they punished also by the fall in battle of many of their bravest and most distinguished warriors, that they made none of their customary attempts to revenge their losses by night attacks, excepting in one case, when encamped on the banks of the Missouri. A volley was fired into my camp about an hour after midnight, without any injury being the result, excepting the killing of one mule and wounding two others. The fire was promptly returned by the men on guard, and no further demonstration was made by the savages.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 453.

From Camp Carter I proceeded to the intrenched portion of Camp Atchison, and, breaking up the encampment, I took up the line of march with the column toward Fort Abercrombie, and am thus far advanced on the route.

I dispatched Colonel McPhail, with four companies of Mounted Rangers and a section of mountain howitzers, from Camp Atchison, with the directions to proceed to the mouth of Snake river, a tributary of the James river, where a small but mischievous band of E. Yanktonnais Sioux are supposed to have planted corn, to make prisoners of the adult males, or destroy them, if resistance was made; thence to sweep the country to the head of the Redwood river, and down that stream to the Minnesota river, and proceed to Fort Ridgley and await further orders.

The region traversed by my column between the first crossing of Cheyenne river and the Coteau of the Missouri is for the most part uninhabitable. If the devil were permitted to select a residence upon the earth, he would probably choose this particular district for an abode, with the redskins' murdering and plundering bands as his ready ministers, to verify by their ruthless deeds his diabolical hate to all who belong to a Christian race. Through this vast desert lakes fair to the eye abound, but generally their waters are strongly alkaline or intensely bitter and brackish. The valleys between them frequently reek with sulphurous and other disagreeable vapors. The heat was so intolerable that the earth was like a heated furnace, and the breezes that swept along its surface were as scorching and suffocating as the famed sirocco. Yet through all these difficulties men and animals toiled on until the objects of the expedition were accomplished.

I could not learn from the Red river half-breeds that any of the Red Lake Chippewas were on the Red river; consequently, in the debilitated condition of the men and the suffering state of the animals, I deemed it improper to make any movement in that direction. I shall, however, on my return, make a demonstration of force toward Otter Tail lake, and other localities where the Chippewa Indians are usually found, and then post the troops under my command so as to protect the frontier at all points from the few roving Indians who are said to infest it.

Should General Sully take up the pursuit of the Indians at the point on the Missouri river where I was obliged to aban-

don it, as I trust he will, and inflict further chastisement upon them, it might be consistent with the security of the Minnesota frontier to diminish the force in this military district; otherwise I have the honor to submit that there may and probably will be a further necessity for the use of the whole of it in further operations against these powerful bands should they attempt, in large numbers, to molest the settlements in retaliation for the losses they have sustained during the late engagements.

So soon as I shall reach Fort Abercrombie—in five or six days from this time—I will probably obtain such additional information of the state of things along the border as will enable me to act understandingly in the disposition of my forces, and will again address you on the subject.<sup>1</sup> I am, Major, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,  
H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

J. F. MELINE,  
*Acting Assistant Adjutant General, Milwaukee.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, August 20, 1863.

*Major General H. W. Halleck, General-in-Chief, Washington, D. C.:*

GENERAL: I have the honor to transmit inclosed reports of Brigadier General Sibley and his subordinates, of the late Indian campaign,<sup>2</sup> and the battles fought with the hostile Sioux. The results of this expedition furnish a sufficient commentary upon the representations and recommendations made to you and the secretary of war by irresponsible persons concerning the organization and conduct of this expedition, and the condition of Indian affairs in Minnesota. It is easy for persons who are not responsible for results to find fault and give advice, but nothing is more certain than that if the suggestions of ——— and others had been adopted, and any force sent against the Indians much smaller than Sibley took with him, such force would have been cut to pieces or driven back, and the

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part I., pp. 907, 908.

<sup>2</sup> Probably those on pp. 852–872, Part I. of Rebellion Records, etc.

whole of the hostile Indians precipitated upon the frontier settlements of Minnesota and Iowa. Of course, the military authorities would have been held accountable, and properly so, whoever might have been their advisers, and whosoever counsels had been adopted. It is safe to suppose that the military authorities who are responsible have taken every possible means to acquaint themselves with the true condition of affairs, and have adopted such measures as will meet the case. As they have the means to procure information which private individuals have not, there can be no reasonable doubt but that they are better informed than any private citizen whatsoever upon matters peculiarly their own business.

I submit these remarks because, although the persons who have been so busy in fault-finding in the matter of Indian affairs in this department have been completely discomfited by the results of Sibley's campaign, it may be certainly predicted that they will not be long resorting to the same course, and with the same confident assurance. It is to be hoped that they are actuated only by a desire to promote the public interest.

General Sully has not made the progress which was expected of him, and which it was in his power to have made, but the Indians were so badly worsted by Sibley, and are in so destitute a condition, that he has nothing to do except follow up Sibley's success with any ordinary energy, and the whole of the Indians of the Upper Missouri will be reduced to a state of quiet which has not obtained for some years. General Sibley's expedition has reached Fort Abercrombie by this date; will probably reach the Mississippi, or those stations near it, by the first week in September. It is my present belief (and I have no doubt a correct one) that I shall be able at once to send South four of the five regiments of infantry now in Minnesota, and one battery of artillery. I shall expect instructions as to where they are to be sent in time. The regiment of Mounted Rangers, the only mounted force in Minnesota, will be disbanded by the expiration of their term of service about October 1st. I would request that authority be given to re-enlist five hundred of them for another year, under a lieutenant colonel. They have horses and arms, have had much experience in frontier service, and will be in good condition. With one regiment of infantry distributed at the various posts in Minnesota, and with this mounted force of five



hundred men, I think the security of the frontier will be effected completely. In truth, I do not myself believe one half of this force will be needed; but some time will elapse before the apprehensions of the frontier settlers will be allayed, and this force will be required to give them sufficient confidence to remain on their farms.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE,

*Major General, Commanding.*

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HDQRS. DIST. OF MINNESOTA, DEPT. OF THE NORTHWEST,  
*In the Field, Camp Hackett,*

FORT ABERCROMBIE, August 23, 1862.

MAJOR: In my last dispatches to headquarters of the department, I inadvertently omitted to state that, after having left Camp Atchison in pursuit of the hostile Indians, I fell in with some of the half-breed hunters from Red river, who informed me that while the main body of the savages had gone toward the Missouri, a small camp of fifteen or twenty lodges had taken the direction of Devil's lake, and would be found on its shores. I immediately dispatched orders to Major Cook, dated twenty-second July, to send Captain Burt of the Seventh Minnesota Volunteers with two companies of infantry and one of cavalry, to scour the country in that quarter.

That efficient officer took up the line of march on the twenty-fourth July, and during eight days' absence from camp he examined thoroughly the region to the west of Devil's lake, without discovering any Indians or fresh traces of them, excepting one young man, a son of Little Crow, who was found in a state of exhaustion on the prairie, and was taken prisoner without resistance, and brought into Camp Atchison. He states positively that his father, Little Crow, was killed at some point in the Big Woods on the Minnesota frontier, by shots from white men, while his father and himself were engaged in picking berries; that his father had taken with him this son and sixteen other men and one woman, and gone from the camp, then at Devil's lake, several weeks previously, to the settlements in Minnesota, to steal horses, Little Crow stating to his son that the Indians were too weak to fight

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part II., pp. 463, 464.

against the whites, and that it was his intention to secure horses, and then to return and take his family to a distant part of the country, where they would not be in danger from the whites.

He has repeated the statement to me without any material variation, and, as his account corroborates the newspaper reports of the mode in which two Indians, who were engaged in picking berries were approached by a Mr. Lampson and his son, and one of them killed and the body accurately described, there is no longer any doubt that the originator of the horrible massacres of 1862 has met his death.

I have brought Wo-wi-na-pa, Little Crow's son, with three other Sioux Indians, taken prisoners by my scouts, to Fort Abercrombie, where they are at present confined. I have ordered a military commission to convene to-day for their trial, the proceedings of which will be sent you when completed. The scouts took prisoners seven women and three or four children, who were in the camp with the three men, but I released them on my departure from James river, where they were found. Two of the women were fugitives from the reservation on the Missouri below, being recognized by the half-breed scouts, as having passed the winter at Fort Snelling. They stated that they had left the reservation in company with three men, who had gone to the main camp on the Missouri.

The result of the expedition under Captain Burt has proved conclusively that there are very few, if any, Sioux Indians between Devil's lake and the Missouri river, and that all the bands whose haunts are in the immense prairie region between the latter stream and the British possessions were concentrated in the great camp driven by my forces across the Missouri.

I have organized an expedition, composed of three companies of cavalry, to proceed to Otter Tail lake, and thence to Fort Ripley, with written instructions to the commanding officer, Major Parker. I shall probably dispatch the Tenth regiment, Minnesota Volunteers, to scour the country from Sauk Centre to Fort Ridgley, more with a view to reassure the settlers along the Big Woods than because I have a belief that any but a few lurking savages are to be found now on the immediate frontier. I shall march from this post on the twenty-fifth with the remainder of my column, and take the route

by Alexandria and Sauk Centre, taking such measures for the security of the border as I may deem necessary.

The cavalry expedition under Major Parker will pass through the region frequented by the Pillager and other strong bands of Chippewa Indians, and will have a decided moral effect.

I will report my movements as opportunities present themselves.<sup>1</sup> I am, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

J. F. MELINE,

*Acting Assistant Adjutant General, Milwaukee.*

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(Confidential.)

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, August 29, 1863.

*Hon. E. M. Stanton,*

MY DEAR SIR: The returning column of General Sibley reached Abercrombie, on the Red River of the North, on the twenty-second instant. At that point the force was divided into several bodies, which are now engaged in scouring the country down the Big Sioux and James rivers, as far as the Iowa line, west to Kid river, and visiting the Chippewas at Red lake, Otter Tail lake, etc., east of Kid river, so that the whole Territory of Dakota, the northern and eastern portions of Minnesota, and, in fact, the whole country east of the Missouri, will be thoroughly visited and searched by our troops. I do not suppose that there are now ten hostile Sioux Indians east of the Missouri river. The large force of Indians, three times defeated and driven across the Missouri river, with the loss of all their winter supplies of provisions and all the robes and furs for winter clothing, will not be able to return to Minnesota this winter, if ever, in a body.

General Sully reached the point on the Missouri where they crossed only a few days after, and will undoubtedly follow them up. As he has only cavalry, he can do this with the utmost rapidity. At all events, with a large cavalry force he has constantly interposed between the hostile Sioux of Min-

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part I., pp. 908, 909.

nesota (now south of the Missouri river) and the State of Minnesota, a glance at the map will exhibit how difficult, if not impossible, it will be for these Indians, in any numbers, to return to the Minnesota frontier this winter. I do not myself believe that there is the slightest likelihood that any Indian hostilities will occur again in that state from Sioux Indians. Small parties of eight or ten men may possibly, at great risk, traverse this long distance and commit some slight depredations; but with the mounted force patrolling the frontier, the risk would be so great that I doubt if the Indians would even attempt this much. I propose to leave one entire regiment of cavalry (the Sixth Iowa) this winter on the Upper Missouri, at Fort Randall and Fort Pierre, as an additional precaution against any attempt of the Sioux to recross to the north (east) side of the Missouri river, and again in the spring to visit the entire Indian nation east of the Rocky Mountains. I also propose to leave in Minnesota an infantry regiment, distributed at the several posts along the frontier, with the mounted force of Hatch and five hundred men of the Mounted Rangers to patrol the whole line of frontier between these stations. I do not myself believe such a force necessary, but in deference to the natural anxiety of the people after the atrocities of last autumn, and to give them the confidence necessary to induce them to remain on their farms, I think it well to keep such a force in Minnesota. All the rest of the force in that state I propose to send South within a few weeks.

I have thought it well to write you thus fully concerning affairs in Minnesota, that you may not be misled by representations that will certainly be made to you. Of course, it is not necessary to tell you that there will be an influence used to keep all the forces in Minnesota; for what purposes you will be at no loss to understand, but I am glad to say that the persons who will thus seek to influence you are men of broken personal and political fortunes, who have objects in view very remote from the public interests. That you may realize what these motives are, and who are the persons, I inclose you some extracts from letters from Colonel S. Miller, the nominee of the late Republican convention for governor of Minnesota. He will be elected by a very large vote, and his opinions, therefore, are entitled to weight, as they will regulate his action as governor. You will see at once the very same names as of the persons who have been infesting the war department, urging

movements or organizations, and finding fault with the conduct of military affairs in Minnesota. The difference is that, whereas a couple of months ago they were ridiculing the size of Sibley's expedition, and urging that the force was too large; that a small body of cavalry was sufficient; that Sibley would not see an Indian; that the Indians had divided into small parties, etc., now they complain and protest that the whole of the force in Minnesota is absolutely needed for their protection. Results have shown how far they were right two months ago, and it is not too much to say that they are quite as far wrong now in their new light. That the coalition between ——, an immaculate Republican, and ——, an equally immaculate Democrat, is perfect, you will be at no loss to see from Miller's letters, and it is an alliance both political and financial. It will be utterly broken down in Minnesota at this election.

I inclose also the resolutions of the Copperhead convention at St. Paul, from which you will see that, properly manipulated, they resolve that the Indian war must be vigorously prosecuted, etc., which means that all the troops must be kept in Minnesota for the benefit of contractors. The Copperhead ticket will be beaten by 10,000 votes at least.

The alliance between —— and —— is well enough understood in Minnesota. —— has been discarded by his party. He never had strength in it, and his election to the senate, resulting from competition between prominent men of the party, surprised everybody. To his other disqualifications and unpopularity, he has of late added bad personal habits, and in his desperation at the certainty of falling into total obscurity after his term expires, he has joined ——, who is about as desperately broken down as himself. Whilst the one has political purposes, the other has financial, and my objection to —— and his organization is simply because —— is but an instrument of ——, as he has been for years, and the organization is simply to be used to promote the effects I have named. I shall use ——'s battalion, however, to the best purpose, replacing it by troops I shall send South. Of the co-operation of the interior department with these people, I dislike to speak. The history of the Indian agents and the management of Indian affairs on the frontier by the Indian department would fully develop the reason of this alliance. Whilst Indian agents become rich, Indians become poor, dis-

satisfied, and hostile. It will not be difficult for you to arrive at these facts from anybody who lives on the frontier and is not connected with these transactions. Many very good and honest people are affected by the influences put in operation by these men, and the fear of Indian hostilities which they excite; but this will wear out in time. Last winter ——— threw the whole eastern frontier of the state into a paroxysm of alarm by telling them gravely, as he came through the country from Lake Superior, that, as soon as the snow fell, the whole Chipewewa Nation would take the war path and ravage the settlements, and I was overwhelmed with petitions for troops and cries of alarm, based on this statement. Its object was apparent, but there was not, and has not been, the slightest intimation of such a thing. The design is to keep up excitement and alarm, to continue the Indian war, and to keep the troops in Minnesota.

I have thought it well that you should understand these things, so as to act advisedly upon the representations which will undoubtedly be made to you. I am confident that you will meet the case wisely, and I shall carry out your wishes with all zeal and energy.<sup>1</sup>

Very Truly Yours,

JNO. POPE.

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AUGUST 24 [1863].

*Major General John Pope, Milwaukee, Wis.,*

MY DEAR GENERAL: I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your kind communication of the twenty-first instant, and rejoice to learn, by the copy of your letter to the general-in-chief, that General Sibley and his gallant command are so well appreciated at department headquarters. Nothing could have been better devised than your double expedition for the utter extermination of the savage miscreants, and nothing more unfortunate than General Sully's failure to be "in at the death." Colonel Marshall, the bearer of dispatches from General Sibley, says that, poor as the grass is upon the Missouri, it is quite as good as was found by General Sibley's expedition anywhere on the route. I earnestly hope that General Sully will get back and give another blow to the murderers; otherwise I shall have serious apprehensions that squads of the enemy will again annoy our frontier settlements.

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part II., pp. 493-495.

I am glad to see that you properly appreciate the trading, corrupt Indian politicians of Minnesota. They are selfish and heartless as Satan, and, were it not for the encouragements held out to them at Washington, we should consign the whole tribe to merited infamy. I was, a few days since, without a single effort of my own, and against the labored protests of ——— and company, unanimously nominated for governor. Their only hope now is to perpetuate their power by nominating ——— against me. He is hesitating whether to try his chances or not; but next Wednesday will determine. If he accepts, I may have to resign as soon as General Sibley returns. He must in that event be beaten, and badly beaten, and with his fall the whole Moccasin brood, except as they are fostered at Washington, will topple to their final destruction.

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AUGUST 20 [26<sup>th</sup>], 1863.

\* \* \* The friends of ——— and ——— are as rabid as ever. They denounce the expedition and General Sibley as a failure, and your dispatch suggesting that the war east of the Missouri is at an end as a terrible outrage upon Minnesota. They pretend to believe that we shall have 2,000 Sioux warriors upon the borders within a month, and, of course, many honest, apprehensive people believe them. I do hope that General Sully has dealt them such a blow as to utterly deprive them of the capacity to return.<sup>1</sup>

Ever Your Friend,

S. MILLER.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, August 25, 1863.

*Brigadier General Alfred Sully, Fort Pierre,*

GENERAL: Your dispatch of the seventeenth is received. It is deeply to be regretted that more rapid progress was not made by the expedition under your command. By referring to my letters to yourself and your predecessor in command, you will find how great was the stress laid upon the necessity of placing yourself in time in position to co-operate with General Sibley, and I am constrained to believe that with energy this much at least could have been accomplished. General

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 495.



Sibley had exactly the same kind of wagons and mules you had (as General Allen, chief quartermaster of the department, himself informs me). He had but little, if any, more wagon transportation in proportion to the strength of his command than you have, yet he marched 600 miles through the same character of country, which had been subjected to the same drought, and with a large infantry force, defeated the Indians in three engagements, drove them across the Missouri river, and actually reached a point on that river 160 miles above Fort Pierre. Whilst your expedition, all cavalry, only marched 160 miles, his column, consisting largely of infantry, marched 600 in that time. Under these circumstances, you will admit that it is hard for me to understand the delay which has attended your movements. It is painful for me to find fault, nor do I desire to say what is unpleasant, but I feel bound to tell you frankly that your movements have greatly disappointed me, and I can find no satisfactory explanation of them. As soon as you receive this letter, you will please cross to the south side of the Missouri and, having loaded your wagons with provision and ammunition, and such medical supplies as are absolutely needed, you will make a thorough campaign in Nebraska, proceeding as far to the west and northwest as possible before the winter overtakes you.

It is desirable that some cavalry force be stationed this winter at Fort Pierre, or in that neighborhood, and provision should be made accordingly. You will please send the necessary orders to the proper officer of your district for this purpose. Your command will occupy Fort Pierre or the neighborhood, Fort Randall, and Sioux City, for the winter, as also such points to the east of Sioux City as will effectually secure the settlements in Dakota and the border settlements of Iowa.

It is essential that such measures be taken, as far as possible, as will prevent the Minnesota Sioux, lately driven south of the Missouri by General Sibley, from recrossing that river and reoccupying Minnesota, or in any large bodies committing depredations north and east of the Missouri.

I entreat you on all accounts to give your individual attention and your utmost energy to the accomplishment of these instructions.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

JNO. POPE.

*Major General, Commanding.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 496, 497.

HDQRS. DIST. OF MINNESOTA, DEPT. OF THE NORTHWEST,  
*In the Field, Camp Rubles,*  
SAUK CENTRE, September 2, 1863.

MAJOR: I have the honor to report my arrival with the column at this post. A requisition has been made upon me by Senator Ramsey, commissioner on the part of the government to negotiate a treaty with the Pembina and Red lake bands of Chippewas, for an escort of two companies of cavalry and one of infantry, or a section of artillery, which I shall, of course, furnish. I shall detach the Tenth regiment from the column there, with orders to scour the country along the line of posts to Fort Ridgley, and like orders to Colonel McPhail will be sent him to-morrow, who, with five companies of cavalry detached to sweep the region from James river to Fort Ridgley, has doubtless reached that post, to visit the line of posts south to the Iowa line.

I have no reason to believe that the Indians will make any immediate raid along the border, but the people fear it, and the steps proposed will at least tend to reassure them.

I have as yet received no dispatch from General Pope or yourself informing me of the receipt of my communications detailing the movements of my immediate command since the engagements with the hostile Indians. I trust to receive one very soon.

Major Camp, commanding Fort Abercrombie, has sent a special messenger to overtake me with information received from Captain Donaldson, who left Pembina on the twenty-seventh instant. Standing Buffalo, a Sisseton chief, who has uniformly been opposed to the war, had visited St. Joseph with a few of his men. He reports that the Indians had recrossed the Missouri, and were now on the Missouri Coteau, near the scene of our first battle; that they intend to winter at Devil's lake; that they are in a state of utter destitution, and seven of the chiefs are desirous to make peace, and deliver up the murderers as the price for obtaining it. He represents the Indians to be very much frightened at the results of operations against them. They have, however, murdered twenty-four miners and one woman, who were on their way down the Missouri in a flatboat. They acknowledge a loss of thirty men in the affair. A child was spared and retained as prisoner. Standing Buffalo further states that the Indians lost many drowned in crossing the Missouri when

we were in chase of them, but they deny that they lost more than thirteen in battle. The remarkable dislike to acknowledge how many are killed in action is characteristic of the race. Forty-six dead bodies were found by my command, and doubtless many more were concealed or carried off and a large number were wounded, who were also transported from the field by their comrades.

No blow ever received by them has created such consternation, and I trust and believe that if General Sully takes their fresh trail inland, and delivers another stroke upon them, they will be for peace at any price.

I would respectfully suggest that Major Hatch's battalion be ordered to garrison a post at St. Joseph or Pembina. They may do good service there. I shall probably leave the column in three or four days and proceed to St. Paul, where I will again address you.<sup>1</sup> I am, Major, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

J. F. MELINE, *Acting Assistant Adjutant General, Milwaukee.*

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HDQRS. DIST. OF MINNESOTA, DEPT. OF THE NORTHWEST,  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, September 12, 1863.

MAJOR: I have the honor to report that the portion of the expeditionary force remaining undetached encamped a few miles above Fort Snelling last night, and will reach the immediate vicinity of that post to-day, and will go into camp until further orders. It consists of the Sixth and Seventh regiments of Minnesota Volunteers, and one section each of six-pounders and mountain howitzers.

I would respectfully suggest for the consideration of Major General Pope, that at least one-third instead of one-fourth of the officers and men who have participated in the long and tiresome campaign just closed be permitted to visit their homes at the same time, so that opportunity be given to all of them to do so before marching orders. In fact, if one half were granted immediate leave of absence for a limited period, the whole matter would be much simplified, especially as the residence of many of the officers and men is remote from this point.

I have carefully perused General Pope's dispatch of twenty-ninth ultimo, relative to the disposition of the forces to remain in the state during the approaching winter.

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part I., pp. 909, 910.

I would respectfully recommend that at least two regiments of infantry in addition to the mounted men of Hatch's battalion and those contemplated to be re-enlisted from the Mounted Rangers be retained for the protection of the border.

The Upper Sioux are desirous to have re-established their former amicable relations with the government, and I think may be made to deliver up, as the price of peace, those of the lower bands who were actors in the tragedies of 1862. But they are in constant intercourse with the Red river half-breeds, and would promptly be informed of the reduction of the force in this district through them, and, if impressed with an idea that the diminution was so great as to prevent the government from further chastising them in case it became necessary, they might be emboldened to continue the war, and thereby necessitate another expedition for their complete subjugation.

As a measure of economy, therefore, I do not think it would be prudent at the present crisis to weaken too much the military force in this district.

So soon as the requisite information can be obtained, I will dispatch to you a full statement of the arrangements proposed to be made for the defense of the frontier, for the consideration of the major general commanding.

I beg leave to state that Fort Abercrombie is already inclosed with a stockade sufficient for defensive purposes, and that earthworks have been erected at Fort Ridgley for the security of that post. The defenses at Fort Ripley are also in good condition, a stockade having been built on all sides, excepting on the river front, where Colonel Thomas does not deem one necessary.

I would respectfully request that none of the regiments to be ordered South receive marching orders before the fifteenth October, by which time all will have had opportunity to visit their homes, and the season for apprehending Indian raids will have passed. As instructed by General Pope, I will indicate in a few days the regiment or regiments to be posted in this state.<sup>1</sup> I am Major, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,

*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

J. F. MELINE, *Acting Assistant Adjutant General, Milwaukee.*

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 910, 911.

HQDRS. DIST. OF MINNESOTA, DEPT. OF THE NORTHWEST,  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, September 16, 1863.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report for your information certain facts which have lately transpired, that may, and probably will, have a most important bearing upon the future relations between the government and the upper bands of Sioux inhabiting the country on the north and east of the Missouri river.

My previous dispatches have fully advised you of the great concentration of Indian warriors, to oppose the column under my command in penetrating the immense prairies between the Red River of the North and the Missouri river, and their utter rout and retreat across the latter stream, with the loss of their subsistence, clothing, and means of transportation, which fell into my hands and were destroyed.

The state of destitution in which they found themselves, and their utter inability to contend with our disciplined troops in the open field, have so terrified the large majority of these savages that they have expressed a fervent desire to re-establish peace with the government at any price.

Standing Buffalo, a leading chief of the Sisseton Sioux, and who has been consistent in his opposition to the hostilities initiated by the Minday, Wakomton, and Wakpeton bands in 1862, lately visited St. Joseph, near the British line, accompanied by several deputies from the other upper bands, and held a conference with Father André, a Catholic priest, who is held in high estimation alike by the half-breed hunters and by the Sioux Indians. So far as I can ascertain, these deputies represented all those powerful bands not immediately implicated in the murders and outrages perpetrated on the Minnesota frontier during the past year, but who participated with the refugees from Wood lake in the engagements with the expeditionary force under my command in the month of July last. In fact, in the communication made to me by Father André, he distinctly states as one of the happy results of the expedition, that "judging from the anxiety displayed by these men (the deputies), the greater portion of the Sioux are desirous of an opportunity to offer their submission, and the murderers, once abandoned by the other Indians, can be easily reduced."

The combination of Indians defeated by my column in the late engagements may be thus classified: Minnesota river

bands, remnants, 250 warriors; Sisseton Sioux, 450 warriors; E. Yanktonais, 1,200 warriors; other straggling bands, including Teton Sioux, from the west side of the Missouri river, probably 400 warriors; making an aggregate force of from 2,300 to 2,500 warriors. These constitute the full strength of the Dakota or Sioux Indians inhabiting the prairies on the east side of the Missouri river, with few and insignificant exceptions. The small number of those who succeeded in effecting their escape after the decisive conflict of Wood lake, and whose crimes against humanity preclude any hope of pardon on the part of the government, when deserted by the great bands they hoped to complicate inextricably in their hostilities against the whites will be rendered powerless for evil, as justly remarked by Father André.

That gentleman, in the communication referred to, gives the substance of the appeal of Standing Buffalo for peace:

He wished me to assure you that neither he nor his men had taken any part in the war against the whites; that he was prepared now, as he always had been, to submit to such disposition as would be satisfactory to the government, and he regretted very much that he could not meet you in your camp to give you this assurance.

He further stated his desire to deliver himself up to the government with his band at such time and place as I might designate, only receiving the assurance that they would not be held as prisoners or removed to a greater distance, referring to the reservation on the Missouri to which the families of Sioux captives have been transferred.

Since the news of General Sully having fallen upon a Sioux camp and destroyed it reached me, I feel sanguine that these bands will be even more than ever disposed to submit, and, with the view of opening communication with them, I respectfully ask that I may be instructed to employ Father André, and such other competent persons as may be deemed necessary, to visit the Indians, and proffer such conditions of peace as you may deem proper to accord under the circumstances.

I would also respectfully suggest that these conditions should embrace the expulsion or delivery of the murderers, and the confining of these bands to the limits at such a safe distance from the settlements in Minnesota as would effectually dissipate all apprehensions of renewed raids on the frontier.

If properly managed, I have every reason to believe that the Indian war will soon be terminated and the quiet of the border entirely restored.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,  
*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

MAJOR GENERAL JOHN POPE, *Milwaukee.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, August 31, 1863.

*Brigadier General Alfred Sully,*

GENERAL: In my letter to you concerning your movements after your return to Fort Pierre, a mistake was made in writing Nebraska instead of Dakota.

It is my purpose that you move from Fort Pierre to the Black Hills, and thence north and northwest as far as practicable before the cold weather begins. These movements, as far as their direction is concerned, will depend, of course, upon the locality of the hostile Indians, but it is your special mission to deal finally, if possible, with the hostile Sioux driven across the Missouri river by General Sibley, and to prevent, in all events, their return to the borders of Minnesota in any large force. If you follow them and press them closely, they will no doubt, in their present destitute condition, seek to make terms with you.

Your action in the matter must of necessity be left to your discretion, the circumstances around you being your guide; but one restriction must be insisted on, and that is this, that these Indians must not return to the north side of the Missouri river under penalty of their lives. Whilst circumstances may render it judicious that they be permitted to remain in peace on the south side of the river, their own crimes have closed forever Dakota or Minnesota to their reoccupation. The peace of the whole border, and particularly the security of the frontier settlements of Minnesota and Iowa, depend upon a vigorous campaign on your part until the cold weather drives you from the plains.

Your presence on the Upper Missouri in time to have co-operated with General Sibley would probably have ended In-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 912, 913.



dian troubles, by destroying or capturing the whole body of Indians which fought General Sibley, but your failure to be in proper position at the proper time, however unavoidable, renders it necessary that you should prosecute with all vigor and dispatch the campaign I have marked out for you.<sup>1</sup> I am, General, respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,  
JNO. POPE,  
*Major General, Commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, October 5, 1863.

*Brigadier General Alfred Sully, Commanding Military Expedition,*

GENERAL: Your several letters and reports concerning your campaign and the battle with the Indians near White Stone Hill, have been received and transmitted to the headquarters of the army. The results are entirely satisfactory, and I doubt not that the effect upon the Northwestern Indians will be, as you report, of the highest consequence. Whilst I regret that difficulties and obstacles of a serious character prevented your co-operation with General Sibley at the time hoped, I bear willing testimony to the distinguished conduct of yourself and your command, and to the important service you have rendered to the government. It gives me the greatest pleasure to perform the agreeable duty of presenting to the government the names of the officers and men who were particularly distinguished in your campaign. To yourself and your command, General, I tender my thanks and congratulations.<sup>2</sup> Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,  
JNO. POPE,  
*Major General, Commanding.*

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<sup>1</sup> War of the Rebellion, Official Records, etc., Series I., Vol. XXII., Part II., pp. 502, 503.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 608.

## NOTE.—NEW ULM.

Several weeks after the press form, containing the statement made on page 253 of this volume, in reference to the alleged burning of *Jesus Christ* in effigy, at New Ulm, in 1862, had been completed, and the type was distributed,—a statement based upon the authority of Mrs. Harriet E. B. McConkey, a contemporary writer, and citizen of Minnesota,—a letter, received by the Hon. H. H. Sibley from Colonel W. Pfaender of New Ulm, one of the original settlers of that place, was transmitted to myself, requesting my attention to its contents. The letter, based upon information, somehow acquired, that the statement of Mrs. McConkey would appear in the volume now published, resents the story as unqualifiedly false, and virtually demands its erasure from the text. Owing to the fact that this had now become impossible, if justifiable, for the reason just given, all that remains to be done here, as the book is nearly ready for the binder's hands, is to give, in the appendix, in justice to all parties, the full statement of Mrs. McConkey, now deceased, and the full statement of Colonel Pfaender, leaving the older citizens of Minnesota to judge of the merits of each.

The statement of Mrs. McConkey is from the second and "*revised edition*" of her work entitled "*Dakota War-Whoop*," St. Paul, 1864, pp. 81, 82, and is as follows:

## ATTACK ON NEW ULM.

Fifteen miles below Ridgley, on the opposite side of the Minnesota river, at the mouth of the Cottonwood, was the neat little town of New Ulm, containing about 1,500 inhabitants. Nature had furnished an inviting site and been lavish with charms on the surroundings. Sad to say, a class of infidel Germans were first attracted by its beauty—were first to build here their homes. The original proprietors had stipulated that no church edifice should ever "*disgrace its soil*," under penalty of returning to the former owners. Thus, with no religious restraints, they became strong in wickedness, defiant of the restraints of the gospel, and resolved that no minister should be allowed to live among them. One they drove from the place, and another was annoyed in every possible way. Even private Christians could not live in peace. They built

a dancing hall, and the Sabbaths were spent in drinking and dancing. Wealth had rolled into their coffers, and they said, "Our own hands have gotten it." As the crowning act of their ungodliness, some of the "baser sort" paraded the streets one bright Sabbath day, while Heaven was preparing the "vials of wrath" at Acton, bearing a mock figure, purporting to represent our blessed Saviour, and labeled with vile and blasphemous mottoes; and the closing scene of the day was burning him in effigy.

The statement of Colonel Pfaender is in the letter of Colonel Pfaender to General H. H. Sibley, under date, "New Ulm, August 19, 1889," the entire letter being as follows:

NEW ULM, MINNESOTA, August 19, 1889.

*General H. H. Sibley, St. Paul,*

DEAR GENERAL: In a few days I shall get some designs for the monument, and as soon as I find that they are in shape to be circulated I will take the pleasure to inform you fully.

The object of this letter is to call your attention to a matter into which, I hope, you will carefully inquire, as it is in relation to the work on your life, which will be published soon.

You are probably aware that an absurd and totally false story of the burning of Christ at New Ulm, some time before the Indian outbreak, has appeared in print in one of the publications on the massacre of 1862, and has at sundry times and places been rehashed with the intention to hurt the reputation of New Ulm. Now, I am credibly informed that this fabrication is to find a place in the history of your life, and I should feel shocked to see a work of such a character polluted by such an unmitigated falsehood, which is a libel on New Ulm that will be resented vigorously if it ever makes its appearance again, since the authors of it had sufficient warning and chance to satisfy themselves of its untruth. Being one of the original settlers of New Ulm, since 1856, and intimately acquainted with its history in the minutest details, I can safely challenge anyone to show the faintest proof for such a damaging allegation, which may have its origin in the burning in effigy of one of the former presidents of the German Land Association, residing in Cincinnati, who had made himself odious by some action hostile to the progress of the New Ulm settlement in its early days.

Please excuse my liberty in calling your attention to this matter, but I thought it would be much better to do it now than to be obliged later to set matters right.

Very Respectfully Yours,

W. PFAENDER.

It will be seen from the statement of Mrs. McConkey that she asserts (1) the anti-christian character of the "original proprietors" of New Ulm; (2) their conduct toward "ministers" of the gospel, and annoyance to "private Christians;" (3) their desecration of the "Sabbath;" (4) the "burning in effigy" of "our Blessed Saviour," by "some of the baser sort" of the "original proprietors;" (5) that this was done "one bright Sabbath day;" and (6) the whole account is introduced by the statement that "the original proprietors had stipulated that no church edifice should ever 'disgrace its soil,'"—the soil of New Ulm,—“under penalty of returning to the former owners.” The whole statement is carefully and particularly made.

It will, also, be seen from the letter of Colonel Pfaender, that he (1) pronounces the story "absurd and totally false;" (2) that it has "appeared in print in one of the publications on the massacre of 1862, and has, at sundry times and places, been rehashed;" (3) and "with the intention to hurt the reputation of New Ulm;" (4) that it is a "fabrication;" (5) and an "unmitigated falsehood;" (6) and "a libel on New Ulm;" (7) and to be "resented vigorously if it ever makes its appearance again;" (8) that "the authors of it had sufficient warning and chance to satisfy themselves of its untruth;" (9) that it is a "damaging allegation;" (10) and, furthermore, Colonel Pfaender makes these counter affirmations, upon his own knowledge as being himself "one of the original settlers of New Ulm since 1856;" (11) and "intimately acquainted with its history;" (12) and "in the minutest details;" and that the person burned in effigy was not Jesus Christ, but "one of the former presidents of the German Land Association, residing in Cincinnati;" (13) that he "can safely challenge anyone to show the faintest proof for such a damaging allegation;" (14) that this allegation "may have its origin" in the burning in effigy of the land president alluded to; and (15) that a work in which the allegation that "Jesus Christ" was burned in effigy at New Ulm should be found, would be "polluted" thereby.

Such are the respective presentations made by the authoress, Mrs. McConkey, now dead, and by Colonel Pfaender, now living, both alive at the time of the alleged events referred to. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the canons and principles of legal, literary, and historical criticism, as to the investigation of an ancient fact, or one alleged to have occurred within the lifetime of a still existing generation. All these are laid down in legal and critical books with great precision, and are of constant application in our courts and institutions of learning. A period of more than a quarter of a century has passed away since the first settlement of New Ulm, and the scenes and events then occurring, and it is to that time the statements of Mrs. McConkey and Colonel Pfaender exclusively relate.

NATHANIEL WEST.

ST. PAUL, September 1, 1889.

It is proper to add, that, upon the receipt of Colonel Pfaender's letter, transmitted to me by General Sibley, I replied in the following communication:

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA,  
522 Cedar Street, August 23, 1889.

*Hon. H. H. Sibley,*

MY DEAR GENERAL: I thank you for sending me the letter of Colonel Pfaender in reference to the alleged burning of our Lord in effigy in 1862, at New Ulm. When I first read the account in Mrs. McConkey's book, I was struck,—not with the statement that our Lord was burned in effigy, for this has been done, and worse than this, many times, in history,—but with the relation in which she placed it, historically, to the Indian attack on New Ulm. I, however, inquired, carefully, of a number of the older citizens of Minnesota, who had no interest of any kind in New Ulm, and was assured that the narrative of Mrs. McConkey—though gainsaid at the time—was not refuted, and well understood to be true. When I observed, again, that Mrs. McConkey's book is a second and "*revised edition*," published in 1864, two years after the alleged occurrence, and, as I am informed, after a public controversy in the papers as to the facts alleged, and, furthermore, found no conclusive literary and critical refutation of her statement, made by any of the many standard and responsible writers on the history of those times, I alluded to

the circumstance in a single sentence, referring to my authority, and passed on to speak of Colonel Flandrau's defense of New Ulm.

I do not desire to enter upon the question of either English, French, German, or American infidelity, here, or the character of "*some*" of the early settlers of New Ulm. Intelligent and good men find enough to deplore, in many places, outside of New Ulm. But, it is very proper, and only right, that I should give Colonel Pfaender, somewhere, the benefit of his denial of the truth of Mrs. McConkey's statement, all the more as I have no reason to regard it as untruthful, and especially as you have assured me that he is a personal friend of yours, of many years' standing, a gentleman whose reputation forbids the supposition that he could knowingly utter what he believed to be untrue. At the same time, while doing justice to the living, I cannot, as a historian, consent to do injustice to the dead. Mrs. McConkey's lips are sealed in the silence of the grave, since now two years. I deplore the fact that, while she was alive, her "second edition" was not, so far as I learn, convicted as false. If it is true that her statement does not establish the alleged fact, it is no less true that Colonel Pfaender's counter statement does not refute it. As a historian, governed by all the canons of historical criticism, I can only do what is right, giving to both parties the benefit of their words,—and for this I shall try to make room in the appendix. Pardon, dear General, my prolix communication, but I am so occupied that I cannot come to see you. I hope to come soon.

May a kind Providence, who has kept you so long, restore you soon to your accustomed vigor and health. My best respects to Mrs. Potts and your family.

Ever Yours Faithfully,

NATHANIEL WEST.

# INDEX.

## A.

	PAGE.
Abbott, Dr. E. Judson.....	427
Mrs. Dr. E. J. (Jane R. Steele).....	427
Catherine.....	427
John.....	427
Lorina.....	427
Theodore.....	427
Aceldama, the Minnesota.....	249
Acton, murders at, beginning of the massacre of 1862 by Indians.....	252
Address, the first of Hon. H. H. Sibley to his constituents.....	134, 135
Address, the second of Hon. H. H. Sibley to his constituents.....	177, 178
African slavery, the problem of.....	97, 98
Agency, the Upper Indian (mouth of the Yellow Medicine river).....	251
Agency, the Lower Indian (mouth of the Redwood river).....	251
Alison, the historian, quoted.....	64
Amendment to the Constitution of Minnesota, in reference to the "Five Million Loan" —	
Of April 15, 1858, to provide the loan.....	346
Of November 6, 1860, practically annulling the loan, after the bonds had been issued.....	347
The supreme court of Minnesota decides this amendment of 1860 to be unconstitutional.....	358
American Fur Company —	
John Jacob Astor of New York, head of.....	48
Robert Stuart of Detroit, chief agent of.....	48
Henry Hastings Sibley, clerk and supply purchasing agent of.....	48, 52
H. H. Sibley becomes a partner in the new.....	52
H. H. Sibley, inspector-in-chief of the trading posts of, from Lake Pepin to the British line.....	53
H. H. Sibley reaches Mendota, November 7, 1834, as head of the Northwestern.....	55
American Geographical Society —	
H. H. Sibley elected a fellow of the.....	366
American Labor and Tariff.....	102
American System, The —	
Origin of.....	101-103
Nature of.....	101, 102
Anti-democratic.....	102
Monopolistic and Plutocratic.....	102
Opposed by Mr. Sibley while yet vindicating territorial appropriations.....	193



	PAGE
Antagonism of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, in 1852.....	175
André, Father.....	307
Apple creek.....	314
Apple river.....	314
Appointed, Henry Hastings Sibley—	
Justice of the peace, for the county of Mackinac, Michigan.....	52
Justice of the peace, for the county of Clayton, Iowa,—a county large as the Empire of France.....	84
Foreman of the first grand jury impaneled west of the Mississippi	139
And commissioned colonel commanding the Indian expedition .....	254
And commissioned brigadier general, United States Volunteers.....	278, 297, 336
And commissioned brevet major general, United States Volunteers	338-340
And commissioned to negotiate treaties with the Indians...341-343,	365
President board of regents of the State University.....	345
President board of commissioners to select city park.....	365
President State Normal School Board.....	365
President board of commissioners to settle Indian claims.....	367
Chairman Committee of Relief, during the locust plague.....	367
President bi-centennial anniversary of the discovery of the Falls of St. Anthony.....	368
Doctor of Laws, LL.D., by the trustees of Princeton College.....	376
Appropriations of Congress to the Territory of Minnesota, during Hon. H. H. Sibley's representation of the same .....	128, 145, 146, 180, 181, 191-196, 202, 208
Aristotle, quoted.....	361, 362
Arnold, the historian, quoted.....	113
Atchinson, commissary and ordnance .....	304
Auge, James.....	372
Austin, Governor.....	353
Averill, Lieutenant Colonel, Sixth regiment.....	310, 311, 312, 314

## B.

Bailey, Alexis.....	54-56, 59, 69
Bailey, Captain, Sixth regiment.....	279
Baigner, W.....	372
Baker, Colonel, Tenth regiment, in front at battle of Stony Lake.....	309, 311, 312
Balcombe, Ste. A. D., president Republican branch of convention to form the State Constitution.....	224
Bankers, New York City, their tribute to H. H. Sibley. ....	355
Banquet—	
First quarter centennial of the battle of Birch Coolie.....	372
Grand annual of the Loyal Legion.....	373
Inaugural to Governor Hubbard.....	368
Semi-Centennary to Henry Hastings Sibley.....	368

	PAGE.
Barbarities of the red man.....	249
Barbarities of the white man.....	293-296
Battles —	
Of Birch Coolie.....	259-261
Of Wood Lake.....	271-273
Of Big Mound.....	308-310
Of Dead Buffalo Lake.....	310-311
Of Stony Lake.....	311-313
Importance of these.....	318-321
Bear, Mrs. Jonathan Sibley and the.....	28
Beaver, Lieutenant F. H.....	310, 314, 315
Beck, E. S.....	372
Beer-barrel whipped for working on Sunday.....	28
Beltrami, Giacomo Costantine, the Italian Patriot and Explorer —	
General Sibley's letter in reference to.....	399-401
Berkeley's ode to America.....	29
Big Mound, battle of.....	308-310
Terrific thunder-storm during.....	309
The lightning loosens the grasp of Colonel McPhail's hand on his sword, at the.....	309
Bills introduced, and others discussed, by Hon. H. H. Sibley, and passed, or acted on, by Congress, during Mr. Sibley's time in that body, viz.:	
Organizing the Territory of Minnesota.....	121-130
For road from St. Louis river, Superior, to Point Douglas and Still-water.....	131, 178, 205
For benefit of Minnesota.....	143, 144
To extend United States laws over Indians.....	143
To establish post roads in Minnesota Territory.....	143
To extend right of pre-emption to settlers on unsurveyed lands.....	143, 163-172
To construct and complete roads in Minnesota Territory...143, 178, 191	
For punishment of crimes by the Indians, and promotion of Indian civilization.....	144, 158
For appropriations for the Territory of Minnesota.....	145
For inclusion of Indians in the seventh United States census..150, 151-156	
For authorizing legislature to lease the school lands.....159, 160, 163	
To amend act establishing the Territory of Minnesota.....	159
For relief of settlers, and other purposes.....	159
For reduction of military reserve of Fort Snelling.....	160-163
For appropriation for survey of the public lands.....	178
For a homestead for settlers.....	184
For indigent insane.....	188-202
For Indian appropriations.....	196
For railroad from the Gulf to the British line.....	203-205
For land grant for school purposes.....	122
For removal of obstructions to the navigation of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers.....	160, 178-201

	PAGE
<b>Bills introduced, etc.— <i>Continued.</i></b>	
For new land district and offices.....	178
To authorize legislature to control all appropriations for territorial government.....	179
For public buildings in the territory.....	183
For support of schools in fractional townships.....	180
General summing up, as to.....	180, 181
<b>Birch Coolie—</b>	
Encampment of Major Brown at.....	259
Indian attack at.....	259, 260
Midnight march of Colonel Sibley to.....	260
Battle of .....	260, 261
Importance of battle of.....	261, 281
<b>Black Friday, execution.....</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>Blakeley Russell.....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Bonds—</b>	
The Minnesota state railroad, authorized by the legislature and the people .....	230, 231
Opposed by Governor H. H. Sibley.....	230
Issued only under mandamus of the supreme court of the state.....	234
Assailed and discredited by the Republican press .....	237
Repudiated by the legislature and the state.....	237
Not any party measure, but the act of the people, under Republican rule.....	238, 239
Defense of repudiation of.....	348
Resistance to repudiation of .....	349
Governor Marshall's expedient for the liquidation of.....	351
Ex-Governor Sibley's anathemas against repudiation.....	351
Legal opinions as to validity of.....	353
Governor Davis insists on the liquidation of.....	356
The banks and business men of New York City denounce repudiation.	355
Governor Pillsbury implores the legislature to be honest.....	357
The United States Circuit Court affirms the validity of the.....	358
The supreme court of the United States affirms the validity of the..	358
The supreme court of the State of Minnesota holds the state liable for the, and checks the tricks of the legislature.....	358
The Democratic party denounces repudiation.....	359
The Republican party evades the payment of the, for more than twenty years....	360
Final settlement of the.....	361
Remarks on the moral question involved in the.....	361-364
<b>Boyden, Hon. Mr., North Carolina, resists establishment of Minnesota Territory.....</b>	<b>109</b>
Replied to by Mr. Sibley.....	110, 111, 126
Again replied to.....	149
<b>Bride, the tall and useful.....</b>	<b>28, 29</b>
<b>British Government—</b>	
Attitude of toward the United States, during the Rebellion of the South, and the Sioux War .....	318, 319

	PAGE.
<b>Brown, Major Joseph R.—</b>	
At the stockade, Lake Traverse .....	60
Justice of the peace.....	84
Encamps at Birch Coolie.....	259
Taps the drum at the execution of the Indians.....	290, 291
Commander of Indian scouts.....	304
At battle of Stony Lake.....	311
Tribute to, by General Sibley.....	405, 406
<b>Brunelle, P.....</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Buffalo —</b>	
Mr. Sibley's encounter with a .....	80, 81
Buffalo-hunting.....	80, 81
<b>Bull, Chaplain.....</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>Burial Party, The —</b>	
Sent to inter the massacred.....	259
Disaster to.....	260
Midnight march to rescue.....	260
Scene at the camp of the.....	261
<b>Burt, Captain .....</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>Burnt Boat island.....</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>Business Men of New York —</b>	
Their thanks to H. H. Sibley .....	355
<b>Business Men of St. Paul —</b>	
Their appeal to General Sibley.....	299
General Sibley's reply to the.....	299, 300

## C.

<b>Cadle, Rev. H., classical teacher of H. H. Sibley.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Cake, serious consequences of teaching how to make.....</b>	<b>29, 30</b>
<b>"Camera Stellata"—"Star Chamber." John Sibley, clerk of, during life.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Camps, Military, of the First Expedition —</b>	
Camp at St. Peter.....	254-257
Camp at Fort Ridgley.....	258
Camp near Birch Coolie.....	259
Camp at Moose lake.....	271, 273
Camp Release.....	273, 275, 277, 279
Camp of the Indians invaded.....	275
Camp Sibley.....	279
Camp Lincoln.....	280
<b>Camps, Military, of the Second Expedition —</b>	
Camp Pope.....	303, 304
Camp Douglas.....	307
Camp Atchison.....	307, 315
Camp near Big Mound.....	311
Camp Kennedy (a dream).....	324
Camp Ambler (sorrow).....	325

	PAGE.
<b>Camps, Military — Continued.</b>	
Camp Slaughter.....	313
Camp Braden, near the Apple river and near the Missouri river.....	314, 315
Camp Braden, order for the homeward return issued by General Sibley .....	317
Personal bereavement in.....	321-325
Sabbath-keeping in.....	322, 323
Chaplains preaching in.....	322, 323
<b>Camp Release —</b>	
Scenes in.....	275, 276
Should be consecrated as a sacred place by the state.....	277
Captives released by General Sibley.....	275-277
“Caput Rotundum” .....	18
Card, fac-simile of, at semi-centennial to General Sibley.....	369
Castle, Captain Henry, poem in honor of General Sibley.....	374
Cat punished for catching a mouse during prayer-time.....	28
Catlin, Governor John, ex-officio, calls the people of the residuum of Wisconsin Territory to meet and send delegate to Congress.....	105
Catlin, George, his work on the Indians.....	91
Cavalry force, lack of in Colonel Sibley's first Indian campaign.....	256 261, 268, 272, 274
<b>Chamberlain, Selah —</b>	
Final settlement of the State of Minnesota with, and adjustment of state railroad bonds.....	361
Charlestown, Massachusetts, the name.....	17
Called “Mishawum” by the Indians.....	17
First settlers in.....	16
Founded by Endicott, Higginson, et al.....	16
John Sibley of.....	18, 19
Estate of John Sibley of.....	18
Chase, Captain, Ninth regiment.....	311
<b>Chase, Hon. M.—</b>	
Acting governor, Territory of Minnesota .....	224
Chicago in 1829, H. H. Sibley's trip to.....	49
Chippewas, or Ojibwas.....	67, 256, 259, 281
Chittenden, Captain, poem of.....	250
Church edifice erected by Mr. Sibley.....	90
Church and state, each has a divine foundation .....	361
Church, First Presbyterian, in Minnesota.....	72
Circular of Hon. H. H. Sibley to the members of the United States House of Representatives .....	126
Civilization, two antagonizing forms of.....	175
The nuclei of the.....	244
Mighty forces of .....	240, 242
The crimes of.....	293-296
Problem of Indian, not solved by the sword.....	327
Clarke, Hyde, Esq., London, England.....	9
Letters of, concerning ancestry of Henry Hastings Sibley.....	9, 10

**Clergy, The —**

Appeal to, by General Sibley, in behalf of public morals and decency .....352, 353

Colonial record of the Sibleys..... 32

**Commission of Henry Hastings Sibley —**

As colonel..... 254

As brigadier general .....335-337

As major general, United States Volunteers.....338, 340

Commission, military, organized to try the Indian criminals..... 279

Number arraigned, tried, found guilty, and condemned by..... 280

Commissioner, United States, H. H. Sibley, to negotiate treaties with the Indians. (*See Treaties.*)

**Comets, Donati's of 1858, Encke's of 1860 —**

Terror of, preceding our war..... 241

Compromise measures of 1850..... 175

Hon. H. H. Sibley, no voice in..... 177

Announced as a finality..... 200

Effect of the..... 241

Confederacy, the Southern..... 282

Its relation to the Indians.....318, 319

**Congress of the United States —**

Hon. H. H. Sibley a member in the Thirtieth Congress, second session, December 3, 1848, to March 3, 1849.....103-135

Thirty-first Congress, first session, December 3, 1849, to September 30, 1850; second session, December 2, 1850, to March 3, 1851.....  
137-158-173

Thirty-second Congress, first session, December 1, 1851, to August 31, 1852; second session, December 6, 1852, to March 3, 1853.....  
174-200-209

Under the administrations of President James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, and Millard Fillmore; the speakers of the house being Honorables R. C. Winthrop, Howell Cobb, and Lynn Boyd....103-299

Struggle to elect a speaker in 1849.....139-141

Fraud upon the official proceedings of, in reference to the Minnesota land bill..... 215

Right of, to disapprove territorial legislation..... 222

Memorial to, exposing corruption and fraud in Minnesota.....218, 219

Opinion legal, as to power of, to repeal a charter..... 220

Political complexion of, during Hon. H. H. Sibley's representation in 1848-1849 ..... 103

Political complexion of, during Hon. H. H. Sibley's representation in 1850-1851 ..... 139

Political complexion of, during Hon. H. H. Sibley's representation in 1852-1853.....175, 176

**Congressional Career of Mr. Sibley —**

One perpetual struggle in behalf of Minnesota..... 207

Conolly, Adjutant A. P..... 372

	PAGE
Constitution of the State of Minnesota —	
Is the report of a committee.....	226
Is the result of a compromise.....	226, 227
Is the substantial instrument formulated by the Democratic branch of the convention.....	226
Conventicle, Thomas and William Sibley sent to jail for attending a	14
Convention, at Charleston, South Carolina, 1860 —	
H. H. Sibley a delegate to the.....	247
H. H. Sibley, member of Committee on Credentials.....	245
H. H. Sibley votes for Douglas.....	245
Convention to form a constitution for the State of Minnesota.....	223
Struggle to get control of.....	223
Each party forms a separate.....	224
Country, state of in 1857-1859.....	223
State of in 1860.....	241-243
Correspondence with Little Crow.....	262-265
Cretin, Right Reverend M.....	64
Crooks, Colonel Ramsey, president of the American Fur Company.....	53
Crooks, Colonel William, of St. Paul.....	53
Colonel, Sixth regiment.....	257, 279, 291, 304, 309, 311, 312, 314
Curtis, Major General, tribute to General Sibley.....	321, 337
Cut-Nose, executed.....	220

## D.

Dakotas, import of the term.....	65
Danger, from money-kings, to a new territory.....	216, 217
Davis, Governor C. K. —	
Appeal to the state legislature to be just, and honor its own ob- ligations.....	356
One of several names to be remembered.....	362
Appoints H. H. Sibley chairman of Committee of Relief, during the locust plague.....	366
Tribute of, to General Sibley, Preface IV. and....	369
Davy, Captain, First regiment, cavalry.....	311
Death of Mrs. Henry Hastings Sibley.....	86, 88, 426
Dead Buffalo Lake, battle of.....	310, 311
Detroit, Michigan.....	43, 47
Gay entrance into, by H. H. Sibley in his painted canoe.....	51
Deer-hunting, Mr. Sibley's description of.....	73-78
Democratic party, organized in Minnesota in 1850.....	223
Attitude toward the state railroad bonds.....	359, 360
Death of the Southern.....	246
Devil, the, in Salem, Massachusetts.....	29
Devil's lake.....	66, 303, 307, 316
Diary of General Sibley, during his Second Expedition against the Sioux —	
Extracts from the.....	304, 307, 309, 310, 315, 322-325, 333



	PAGE.
Difficulties to be overcome in the pursuit of Little Crow, and his warriors.....	256, 257, 265-270
Dillon, Judge, United States Circuit Court, decision of, as to the state railroad bonds.....	358
Diploma, fac-simile of, conferring degree of "Doctor of Laws" on Hon. H. H. Sibley.....	377
Domesday Book (liber domus Dei).....	13
Dooley, Major (scouts) .....	304
Douglas, Hon. Stephen A.—	
Introduces a bill to establish Minnesota Territory.....	104, 121
Prefers Mendota as the capital of the territory and state.....	121, 122
Powerful aid of, in securing the passage of the bill organizing Minnesota Territory.....	129
The friend of Minnesota.....	134
Leader of the Northern Democracy in 1860.....	243
The Democratic Northwest a unit for in 1860 .....	243
Favorite of the Democracy of Minnesota.....	246
Nominated for the presidency of the United States in 1860.....	246
Dousman, Colonel H. L., of the firm of Dousman, Rolette & Sibley.....	53
Tribute to, by General Sibley.....	404, 405
Dream of General Sibley, in his tent.....	324
Ducks, the Indian, and Sibley.....	57
Duley, M., of Lake Shetek, at the execution of the Indians.....	291

## E.

Early settlers in Minnesota, names of.....	69
East, Magi from the, came to see young Minnesota .....	214
Edgerton, Captain, Sixth regiment.....	309
Egan, Captain J. J., Sixth regiment, tribute to Colonel Sibley.....	372
Elected, Henry Hastings Sibley —	
Delegate to Congress from Territory of Wisconsin .....	105
Delegate to Congress from Territory of Minnesota.....	138
Re-elected delegate to Congress from Territory of Minnesota.....	175
Member of territorial legislature.....	212
President Democratic branch of convention to form state constitution .....	224
First governor of the State of Minnesota.....	228
Delegate to Charleston Convention, South Carolina.....	244
President St. Paul City Bank.....	343
President Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Company.....	343
President Chamber of Commerce.....	343
Member of state legislature.....	354
President of State Democratic Convention .....	359
Director First National Bank.....	365
Fellow of the American Geographical Society.....	366
President Oakland Cemetery Association.....	367
President thirteenth anniversary of State Historical Society.....	367

	PAGE.
<b>Elected, Henry Hastings Sibley — Continued.</b>	
President of inaugural banquet to Governor Hubbard .....	368
President Minnesota Club.....	370
Commander Loyal Legion.....	373
Member Cliosophic Society, Princeton College.....	375
Elk-hunting, Mr. Sibley's.....	80
Eloquent peroration of Mr. Sibley on the Indian question.....	155, 156
As delegate to Congress from Minnesota.....	137, 138, 175
As member of the territorial legislature .....	211, 212, 216
As first governor of the state.....	228
As member of the state legislature.....	384
Endicott, John, Governor.....	16
Endicott's advance fleet.....	16
Number of immigrants in.....	16
Laws at Salem, Massachusetts.....	16
Charlestown, Massachusetts, founded by a portion of the company of.....	17
<b>"E Pluribus Unum"—</b>	
Motto for the escutcheon of the United States.....	243
Reported by Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin, July 4, 1776.....	243
A federal motto.....	243
Same import as the national flag.....	243
<b>Ethics —</b>	
The Machiavellian and Darwinian.....	296
The Rob Roy.....	352
The Herbert Spencer.....	362
The Bentham-Paley.....	362
The Roman state.....	322
Expediency, false doctrine of.....	363
Illustrations of .....	322, 352, 363
<b>Expeditions, Military —</b>	
First, of Colonel Sibley, against the Sioux Indians.....	254-284
First, results of the.....	283
Second, of General Sibley against the Sioux Indians.....	302-327
Second, results of the.....	316
Combined results of both.....	326
Excursion, great railroad, to St. Paul, June, 1854.....	213, 214
Execution of the Sioux Indians, December 26, 1862.....	
Divergent opinion as to the.....	284
Protests against the.....	284
Counter protests, in favor of.....	285
Critical situation at the time of the.....	285
Official dispatches as to the.....	285-287
Order of President Lincoln in reference to the.....	287
Order of General Sibley, as to the.....	288
Action of Colonel Miller as to the.....	289
List of names of the executed.....	288
Scenes attending the.....	289, 290
Remarks upon the.....	292-296

	PAGE.
<b>Expedition, hunting, of H. H. Sibley, in 1840.....</b>	<b>73</b>
In 1841.....	74-77
Mode of inaugurating a.....	74
Total game secured in the.....	78
Courage of H. H. Sibley, in face of fire and powder kegs.....	79
<b>Europe, condition of, in 1848-1849, when H. H. Sibley entered on his political career.....</b>	<b>95</b>
Condition of, in 1860, at the close of Governor Sibley's administration.....	240
<b>Evans, Hon. Mr., of Maryland, raises a "point of order" as to the establishment of the Territory of Minnesota.....</b>	<b>128</b>

## F.

<b>Family, and family connections of Henry Hastings Sibley .....</b>	<b>426-428</b>
<b>Faribault, the two.....</b>	<b>69, 73, 76, 79</b>
<b>Featherstonhaugh, G. W.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Forbes, W. H.....</b>	<b>73, 83</b>
<b>Flag, the national.....</b>	<b>243</b>
Origin of the Stars and Stripes. ( <i>See "E Pluribus Unum"</i> ).....	243
<b>Flandrau, Hon. Charles E.—</b>	
Dissenting opinion of, from the other members of the supreme court, in regard to the issuance of the state railroad bonds .....	234, 236
Speeds to the relief of New Ulm.....	253
Reinforcements sent to.....	254
Successful defense of New Ulm by.....	253
Successful retreat by, from New Ulm.....	254, 255
Commissioned as colonel, commanding the southwestern frontier of Minnesota.....	253
Picture of the times in Minnesota, in 1857.....	229, 230
Chairman of Committee on Resolutions in Democratic convention of 1881 .....	358
Platform reported by, in 1881.....	359
One of several names to be remembered .....	363
View of, in reference to the five million loan.....	348
Tribute by, to H. H. Sibley.....	122
<b>Flandrau, Lieutenant. (<i>See Staff.</i>)</b>	
<b>Fleet, the Winthrop.....</b>	<b>2, 3, 14-16</b>
The Endicott.....	14-16
John Sibley of Salem, said to have come over in the .....	14, 19
<b>Forbes, W. H., Captain.....</b>	<b>73, 83</b>
<b>Foreman, H. H. Sibley —</b>	
Of the first grand jury impaneled west of the Mississippi river.....	139
<b>Fort Ridgley —</b>	
Attacked by the Indians.....	253
Bravely defends itself till reinforcements arrive.....	255
McPhail's advance reaches.....	258
Colonel Sibley in force, arrives at.....	258

	PAGE
<b>Fort Ridgley — Continued.</b>	
Camp formed at.....	258
The base of further operations .....	258
Burying party sent out from.....	259
Alarm and excitement in.....	259
McPhail dispatched from, to the relief of the burial party.....	259
Colonel Sibley, in force, marches from, to the relief of both.....	260
Foote, Senator, letter of H. H. Sibley to .....	108
<b>Fraud, in relation to the Minnesota land bill.....</b>	<b>215</b>
The country agitated by discovery of, upon the records of Congress.....	216
Exposure of, by memorial to Congress .....	218, 219
Corruption and, in the state legislature.....	218, 219
Investigated by Congress.....	216
<b>Frazer, "Jack" —</b>	
A renowned half-breed.....	73
Guide of Sibley and Fremont .....	74
History of, by "Walker-in-the-Pines," alias H. H. Sibley.....	396
<b>Fremont, Lieutenant J. C., the "Pathfinder" —</b>	
Goes hunting with H. H. Sibley.....	73
Disgusted with the toils of savage life, returns to Prairie du Chien..	74
Mr. Sibley's mansion at Mendota the temporary home of.....	91
<b>Freeman, Lieutenant.....</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Frere, Antoine.....</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>Fur and anti-fur companies.....</b>	<b>212</b>

## G.

<b>Galbraith, Major T. J., Renville Rangers.....</b>	<b>252, 253, 263, 271</b>
<b>Gall, Sioux Indian Chief —</b>	
Signs, regretfully, the treaty of 1889.....	329
<b>Game, quantity taken, in one expedition, by H. H. Sibley and the Indian hunters.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Gander-shot, splendid, by H. H. Sibley.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Gardner, Sergeant .....</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Garfield, President United States of America —</b>	
Resolution as to the assassination of.....	359, 360
<b>Gear, Rev. Ezekiel, chaplain .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Giddings, Hon. M. of Ohio —</b>	
Resists the establishment of Minnesota Territory.....	127
Views of, as to the "Higher Law" .....	171
Compliment to Mr. Sibley.....	199
<b>Gitche Manitou, the.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Globe, the daily, of St. Paul, tribute to General Sibley.....</b>	<b>379, 380</b>
<b>Grant, president United States, eulogy upon, by General Sibley .....</b>	<b>370, 373</b>
<b>Grant, Captain W. H., Sixth regiment.....</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>Grant, Colonel H. P., Sixth regiment.....</b>	<b>372</b>

Grass, John, Sioux Indian chief, signs the treaty of 1889, after long resistance.....	329
Great events in 1848, when Mr. Sibley entered on his congressional career .....	94-97
Great movements, born of small beginnings.....	113
Goodrich, A., chief justice of Minnesota.....	133-139
Tribute by, to H. H. Sibley .....	107, 108
Gorman, Governor of Minnesota —	
Signs the bill incorporating the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad Company.....	213
Protests against its charter.....	217
Gorman, Lieutenant, Renville Rangers .....	271
Gott, Hon. Mr., New York.....	3, 6, 271, 317
Opposed to the establishment of the Territory of Minnesota.....	127
Guests, distinguished, of H. H. Sibley, at Mendota.....	91

## H.

“Hal a Dakotah,” nom de plume of H. H. Sibley.....	79, 283, 304
Haralsen, Hon. Mr. —	
Prays for “more light” in order to see whether Minnesota Territory should be established.....	127
Harastty, Count.....	92
Hart, W.....	372
Hastings William, Esq., of Boston, legal instructor of Henry Hastings Sibley’s father.....	33
Hastings, city of, in Minnesota, called after Henry Hastings Sibley.....	425
Heard, Lieutenant I. V. D.....	279
“Hetuck,” Indian sobriquet of Colonel Sproat.....	40
Hawthorne, Lieutenant .....	304
Hendricks, Captain .....	271
Hiawatha, the, of Longfellow.....	88, 430
Legend of.....	430
Higginson, Rev. Mr.....	14, 16
With others founds Charlestown, Massachusetts .....	16
Higher Law —	
The Minnesota pioneers.....	168
H. H. Sibley’s defense of.....	168-170
Natural right is.....	170
Public opinion is .....	171
Divine example is.....	170
Asserted by all parties .....	171
As good for the white pioneer as for the black slave.....	171
Hon. J. R. Giddings, and.....	171
Squatter sovereignty is.....	172
Right of pre-emption on unsurveyed lands is.....	172
Moral principles are.....	178
Hole-in-the-Day.....	281

	PAGE
Home of Henry Hastings Sibley —	
Description of, in Mendota.....	418-420
Description of, in St. Paul.....	420-425
Honors bestowed upon Henry Hastings Sibley —	
52, 64, 83, 84, 105, 138, 175, 211, 212, 221, 228, 244, 254, 278, 297, 301,	
303, 336, 339, 341, 343, 345, 354, 355, 359, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370,	
372, 373, 375, 378.	
Hopkins, Stephen (signer of Declaration).....	35
Sarah, sister of .....	35
Horace, quoted.....	69
Hotel, the Sibley.....	59
Hubbard, Governor.....	368
Huggins, Mr .....	63
Hunting —	
The buffalo.....	80, 81
The elk.....	80
The deer.....	73-78
Mode of inaugurating a, expedition .....	73, 74-76
Mode of.....	77

## I.

Ihanktowana (One End of the Village).....	66
Ihanktowans (Other End of the Village).....	66
Immigration into the Northwest.....	97
Independence, American, first germ of, where found.....	14
Indians —	
Their universal kindness to Mr. Sibley.....	60
Number, and distribution of the Sioux.....	65, 66
Primitive virtues of the.....	67, 68
The question as to the, when Mr. Sibley entered public life.....	99
Policy of the government toward the.....	99, 100
Policy of extermination of the.....	152, 196, 200, 284; note, 293, 328
Policy of civilization of the.....	151-156, 173, 343
The remedy proposed for the.....	154-156
Treachery of the United States Government to the.....	151, 154, 251, 293, 294
Bloody revenge of the.....	248, 249
Execution of the.....	284
Abrogation of treaties with the .....	292
Removal of the, from the state.....	292
Opening, again, of the reservation of the Sioux, to white settlers,	
1889.....	note, 329
Indian wars .....	153, 283
Indian names.....	270, 272, 273, 275, 283, 287, 289, 290
Indian costume of H. H. Sibley .....	78
Indian problem, the .....	328
Ireland, Bishop.....	368

## J.

	PAGE.
Johnson, President Andrew.....	338
Johnson, Major General R. W .....	427
Mrs. R. W. (Rachel Steele).....	427
Lieutenant Alfred B., United States Army.....	427
Richard W., medical department United States Army.....	427
Henry Sibley.....	427
Military record of.....	note, 427
Mustered out of volunteer service .....	340
Retired army officer.....	note, 427
Attitude toward the state railroad bonds.....	360
Nominated for governor.....	360
Speech of, at his nomination.....	360
At the bi-centennial.....	368
Remarks by, on the political situation of Minnesota.....	360
One of names to be remembered.....	363
Mrs. A. B. (Kitty Smyth).....	427
Kitty Smyth .....	427
Rachel Louise.....	427
Jones, Captain, artillery.....	304
Justice of the Peace —	
H. H. Sibley a, at Mackinac.....	52
H. H. Sibley a, at Mendota.....	83, 84
Justice, easy mode of administering in Minnesota.....	84

## K.

Kapossia, Little Crow's village.....	67
Kaufman, Hon. Mr., of Texas, opposes the establishment of the Territory of Minnesota.....	128
Kennedy, Camp (Sibley's dream).....	324
Kimball, assistant quartermaster.....	304
Kinzie, John.....	49
Kittson, Norman W., Commodore.....	69, 368
Kosciusko, the Hungarian Patriot —	
The personal friend of H. H. Sibley's maternal grandfather.....	43
Paints the portrait of Colonel Ebenezer Sproat.....	43

## L.

Labathe, humorous story about .....	411, 412
Laframboise, Louis.....	69
Lake Sibley.....	308
Lake Augusta.....	425
Lake, Wood.....	271-273
Lampeon, Mr. Chauncey, kills Little Crow.....	332
Land Grants of 500,000, then of 852,480, and again, of 4,500,000, acres contained in the Minnesota land bills passed by Congress, in 1841, 1854, and 1857.....	212, 216, 223, 351



	PAGE.
La Flesh, Bishop .....	368
Legislation —	
Moral principles more authoritative than all opposing .....	175, 176
Legislature of Minnesota —	
Joint resolution in regard to the military worth of General Sibley..	298
Loans the credit of the state, in a time of panic, to the extent of \$5,000,000, to impecunious railroad companies, amending the Constitution in order to do this.....	345-347
Repudiates its obligations, and those of the state, under the plea of necessity, state sovereignty, and the will of the people.....	346-348
After many years, makes a final settlement, by compromise with the bondholders, the sentiment of the whole country compelling the same.....	349-361
Corruption of the territorial.....	216-222
Folly of the territorial.....	231
Corruption of the state .....	347-353, 355-358
Letters of Colonel Sibley to his wife, as to the military situation....	266, 267
Levin, Hon. Mr., of Pennsylvania opposed to the establishment of the Territory of Minnesota.....	128
Liberty —	
Germ of American, where found.....	14
Kindling her torch among the nations.....	14
Genius of.....	240-243
Spirit of .....	242
Convulsing Europe.....	95, 96
Convulsing the United States.....	97-99
Library of Henry Hastings Sibley, as a pioneer.....	61, 62
Lincoln, President Abraham.....	242, 246, 284, 287, 288, 289, 300
Liquor, intoxicating, forbidden to the troops, by General Sibley .....	322
List of published writings, by H. H. Sibley.....	406
Little Crow, "Ta-wai-o-ta-doo-ta," "Le Petit Corbeau"—	
Historic notice of, by H. H. Sibley.....	332, 333
Leader of the massacre in 1862.....	252
Correspondence with H. H. Sibley.....	262, 265
Defeated at Birch Coolie.....	260
Defeated at Wood lake.....	271, 272
Escapes to the Yankton Sioux.....	273, 274
Reward of five hundred dollars offered for the capture of.....	281
Fate of.....	332, 333
Scalp and arm bones of.....	333
Other reference to.....	67, 255, 257, 258
Livingston, M. Crawford .....	427
Mrs. Crawford (Mary Steele).....	427
Mary Steele.....	427
Abbie Potts.....	427
Henry Sibley.....	427
Gerald .....	427

	PAGE.
<b>Loan, the "Five Million"—</b>	
The folly of Minnesota.....	230
Forbidden by the State Constitution.....	231
The Constitution amended to favor the.....	231
The people, regardless of party, approve the amendment to favor the.....	231, 238, 239
<b>Loomis, Colonel Gustavus.....</b>	63
<b>Longfellow, quoted.....</b>	88
<b>Louisiana Purchase, The —</b>	
Extent of.....	118
Price paid for .....	118
Acquired under Jefferson's administration.....	118

## M.

<b>Mackinac—</b>	
H. H. Sibley, clerk at, five years.....	48-50
H. H. Sibley leaves Mackinac for Mendota.....	55
<b>McIntyre, Mr. Charles.....</b>	427
Mrs. Charles (Abbie Potts).....	427
William (deceased).....	427
Alice.....	427
Charles.....	427
Helen.....	427
<b>McKnight, Mrs. S—</b>	
Splendid painting by, in the office of General Sibley.....	425
<b>McLaren, Major.....</b>	272, 291, 304, 311
<b>McPhail, Captain, First regiment, cavalry.....</b>	257-291, 304, 309
<b>Magi from the East, visiting St. Paul.....</b>	214
<b>Malmros, Adjutant General O.....</b>	256, 268
<b>Mankato—</b>	
Scene of the execution of the sentenced Indians.....	289
Retreat from New Ulm to.....	255
<b>Maniac, the (a poem).....</b>	250
<b>Marsh, Captain (massacred) .....</b>	253
<b>Marshall, Lieutenant Colonel—</b>	
Seventh regiment, 272, 276, 279, 282, 291, 304, 309, 310, 311, 312, 320, 326	
Conducts the captured Indians to Fort Snelling.....	281
<b>Marshall, Governor—</b>	
Proposes a scheme for liquidation of the state railroad bonds.....	351
Tributes to General Sibley.....	320, 344, 374
<b>Marryatt, British Naval Post Captain, and Novelist—</b>	
Is a guest of H. H. Sibley, at Mendota.....	91
Is dismissed from his hospitality.....	92
<b>Martin, H.....</b>	372
<b>Mason, Hon. Mr.—</b>	
Ridicules the speech of H. H. Sibley, defending the rights of the red man.....	157
Replied to by Mr. Sibley.....	157

	PAGE.
<b>Massachusetts Bay Company—</b>	
Surrender of its charter, the germ of American independence.....	15
<b>Massacre, the Sioux of 1862—</b>	
Description of.....	243
Extent of.....	249
Causes of.....	251, 252
Helpless condition of the state at the time of.....	256
Not without some excuse.....	293
Prophecy of, by Mr. Sibley.....	155
<b>M'dewakontonwans (Village of the Spirit Lake).....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Mendota (St. Peter's) —</b>	
H. H. Sibley arrives at, November 7, 1834.....	55
Picturesque scenery of.....	55
Hamlet of Bailly at.....	55
Loneliness of.....	55, 56
Duck-shooting near.....	58
Comic scene between H. H. Sibley and a Sioux Indian. ....	58, 59
Builds a house at, the first stone residence in all the Northwest re- gion.....	59, 60
The "Sibley Hotel.".....	59
Preparations behind, for a hunting expedition.....	75
H. H. Sibley and Sarah Jane Steele married at.....	86
Mrs. Dr. A. A. Potts, and Mrs. General R. W. Johnson, married at	86
H. H. Sibley erects a church edifice at.....	64, 90
The home at .....	90
Distinguished visitors at.....	90, 91
Encounter of H. H. Sibley at, with Captain Marryatt, British naval officer and novelist.....	91, 92
The hospitality at.....	93
Leaves, for Washington, and enters upon his congressional career..	105
Senator Douglas desires to locate the capital of the Territory of Minnesota at.....	121
H. H. Sibley refuses to have the capital at .....	121, 208
Governor Alexander Ramsey makes his first home with H. H. Sib- ley at.....	132
Return from Washington to.....	135, 237
H. H. Sibley leaves, a second time for Washington.....	138
H. H. Sibley, having been elected governor of the state, leaves, and resides in St. Paul, 1857.....	228, 229
Description of Mendota.....	418-420
<b>Midnight march to Birch Coolie.....</b>	<b>260</b>
<b>Millenium —</b>	
Invitation to the legislature of Minnesota to inaugurate the.....	215
Relation of railroads to the.....	214
<b>Miller, Colonel, Eighth regiment.....</b>	<b>285, 288, 289, 292</b>
<b>Milton, quoted.....</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>Minnesota Territory —</b>	
The hyperborean pine-log region of rude and semi-civilized people.	106, 107

	PAGE.
<b>Minnesota Territory — Continued.</b>	
Had small beginnings.....	113, 114
History of the.....	117
Population of the.....	120
The child of a "double mother".....	119
Schooled under eight different jurisdictions.....	119
Western part of, under six.....	120
Eastern part of, under four.....	120
Different names for the.....	121
Organization of the.....	120-130
Struggle of H. H. Sibley to secure the passage of the bill organizing.....	128
Grand strategy of H. H. Sibley to secure the passage of the bill.....	129
Wilmot proviso excluded from the organization of.....	123, 124
Bill to organize, passed March 3, 1849.....	130
Lively scenes in the final struggle to pass the bill.....	125-128
The name "Minnesota" retained.....	121
The capital of, is located at St. Paul.....	121
One-eighteenth of the whole secured for school purposes.....	121
Influence of H. H. Sibley in achieving the passage of the bill organizing.....	130
Great help from Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, and others, in the struggle to organize.....	129, 134
Joy of Hon. H. H. Sibley at the passage of the bill organizing the..	130
Motto for.....	133
Grand jubilee and excitement in St. Paul at news of the organization of.....	133, 134
Address of H. H. Sibley to the people of.....	135
Alexander Ramsey, first governor of.....	133
Official proclamations of the actual organization of.....	133, 137
Aaron Goodrich, first chief justice of.....	133
First "Fourth of July," after the organization of.....	133
Eminent men who aided to organize.....	134
H. H. Sibley, first delegate to Congress from.....	137
The many wants of.....	141, 142
Legislature of, incorporates March, 1854, the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad Company with enormous powers and franchises, the governor signing the bill.....	213
Hon. H. H. Sibley, and others, June, 1854, secure a proviso in the Minnesota land bill, in Congress, that defeats the schemes of the company, and the corruptions of the legislature of.....	213
Congress, June, 1854, grants 852,480 acres, for railway purposes, to	213
Fraud practiced on the records of Congress in relation to the grant to.....	215
Booming the, June, 1854. The, invited to inaugurate the millenium.....	215
H. H. Sibley elected, October, 1854, to the Sixth Legislature of....	216
Governor Gorman protests against the corruption of.....	216

**Minnesota Territory — Continued.**

Hon. H. H. Sibley exposes the corruption of the Minnesota & North-western, and the legislature of.....	217-219
Legal opinions obtained as to the power of Congress over.....	220, 221
Congress, March, 1857, grants 4,500,000 more acres to.....	223
Legislature of, May, 1857, passes over to four delinquent railroad companies, "all lands" donated by Congress to.....	213
The people of the territory meet, July, 1857, by delegates to form a state constitution.....	223, 224
The State Constitution ratified, October 13, 1857, by the people of, is the adopted report, August 29, 1852, of a "Joint Committee of Conference and Compromise," composed of members of a divided and separately acting convention .....	223-227
Expiration of, and admission of, into the Union, as a state, April 7, 1858.....	227
Population of, when admitted as a state.....	222
Delay in the admission of.....	226-228
Injury and embarrassment due to the delay, in admitting, as a state	227
Salaries and duties of officers of.....	183
Appropriations made for, during Mr. Sibley's representation of.....	128, 145, 146, 181, 191, 196, 202

**Minnesota, State of —**

The, went into organic operation, as such, before her admission into the Union.....	227
Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, the first governor of the.....	229
Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, the only Democratic governor of the	228
Great financial panic, affecting the.....	229
Constitution of the, amended to loan the credit of the, to impecunious railroad companies, to the extent of five millions of dollars.....	230, 231
Governor Sibley refuses to issue state railroad bonds, unless the state is secured by "priority of lien" on first mortgage bonds of the companies.....	233
The supreme court of the, assumes jurisdiction over the governor of the, on the technical ground of a legal waiver, and the governor is compelled under writ of mandamus to issue the bonds of the...	233
Dissenting opinion of Hon. Charles E. Flandrau in reference to the railroad bonds of the.....	235
Disastrous failure of the whole enterprise connected with the railroad bonds of the.....	236
The, practically repudiates her financial obligations.....	237, 347
Heroic struggle of Governor Sibley to redeem the honor and credit of the.....	237-239
Appeal to the, by H. H. Sibley, as governor of the, to redeem her honor and credit.....	237
The, for Stephen A. Douglas, as presidential candidate in 1860..	243-246
The, represented in the National Democratic Convention, at Charleston, South Carolina, 1860, by Hon. H. H. Sibley, and others..	244-246

**Minnesota, State of— Continued.**

Defection in the Democratic delegation of the, at Charleston, South Carolina, 1860.....	245, 246
Hon. Alexander Ramsey succeeds Hon. H. H. Sibley as governor of the .....	254
The, unprepared for the Sioux Massacre of 1862.....	256, 257
The, depends on her own arm, though fighting at the same time to save the nation, and, without other than Minnesota troops, overcomes the savages.....	273
The, under Republican rule, repudiates her obligations as to the railroad bonds, by asserting state sovereignty, and changing the Constitution, expunging, in fact, the record of her obligations, and tying the hands of the legislature, the legislature consenting.	347, 348
The disgrace of "repudiation" by the, sought to be removed by various ex-governors, governors, and a few noble men, during a conflict of twenty-five long years of Republican rule.....	347-364
Attitude of the Democratic party of the, toward repudiation by the	359-360
The, redeems, at last, in measure, her credit, under the force of national opinion, and offer of compromise by the bondholders....	361
Ministerial support in early times.....	24
Missionaries, early, of the territory.....	64
Motto of the territorial seal.....	132, 326
Music, church, in early times.....	24

**N.****Neill, Rev. E. D., D.D.—**

Tribute to Mrs. H. H. Sibley .....	88
On the motto of the Territory of Minnesota.....	134
Sermon on railroads.....	214
At the bi-centennial of the discovery of the Falls of St. Anthony...	368
Tribute to H. H. Sibley's humanity and kindness .....	415
Nelson, Judge, United States Circuit Court, the decision of, as to the state railroad bonds.....	368

**New England —**

The true spirit of a man of.....	22
A religious more than commercial plaint.....	22
Chief towns of, within thirty years after landing of the Pilgrims..	3
Salem, Massachusetts, the second town in.....	3
New Plymouth, the first town in.....	3

**New Ulm. (See Ulm.)**

Nicollet, Jean, early explorer.....	68, 69
-------------------------------------	--------

**Nicollet, Jean —**

Guest of H. H. Sibley at Mendota.....	90
Tribute to, by H. H. Sibley .....	91
Norris, James, obscure person to whom Minnesota is indebted for her first congressional appropriation .....	128

	Page
North, Mr. J. W.....	224
Northrop, Cyrus, LL.D., letter of, to General Sibley.....	378
Northwest Territory —	
Origin of the expression.....	117
Extent of the .....	117
Ceded, by Virginia, to the United States.....	117
Minnesota the only state formed out of the, whose boundary lines, east and west, cross the Mississippi.....	118
Number of states designed to be formed out of the.....	121
Consecrated to freedom.....	117
Notes, private, of General Sibley, on the Sioux War.....	249, 256, 263, 276
Extracts from.....	275, 276, 294

## O.

Office, the Business, of General Sibley —	
Description of.....	425
Olin, Lieutenant, Third regiment.....	279, 304
Old settlers in Minnesota.....	69, 120
Opinion, legal, of Walworth, Bronson, Noyes, and Barbour, as to the power of Congress to annul a territorial charter.....	220, 221
Order, military, of General Sibley, for the homeward march.....	317
Other-Day, John (friendly Indian) —	
Bravery of, at battle of Wood Lake.....	272, 425

## P.

Party —	
The Democratic, in Minnesota, organized in 1850.....	223
The Republican, in Minnesota, organized in 1854.....	223
Sharp conflict of both parties in Minnesota in 1857.....	223
Parliamentary Tactics —	
In the final struggle to pass the bill organizing the Territory of Minnesota .....	125-129
In the effort by each political party to gain control of the conven- tion to form the Constitution of the State of Minnesota.....	224, 225
Patterson, Rev. A. B.....	64
Patton, Rev. F. L., D.D., LL.D., letter of, to Hon. H. H. Sibley.....	376
Pear, huge, grown by Solomon Sibley.....	34
Pew system in Sutton, Massachusetts.....	23
Pillsbury, Governor —	
Appoints H. H. Sibley president of the board of regents of the University of Minnesota.....	345
Implores the legislature to repel repudiation.....	356, 357
Calls an extra session of the legislature.....	358
One of names to be remembered .....	363
Letter of, to Hon. H. H. Sibley.....	366
Pilgrims, landing of the.....	3
Pioneers, the Early —	
privations of .....	39-42



	PAGE.
<b>Pioneers, the Early — <i>Continued.</i></b>	
Character of.....	72
Defense of.....	165-172, 185-187
<b>Pioneer Press of St. Paul —</b>	
Tribute to General Sibley.....	378, 379
<b>Polk, President James K.....</b>	104
<b>Pond, Rev. S. W., missionary.....</b>	64
Rev. G. W., missionary.....	64
<b>Pope, Major General, United States Army.....</b>	267, 268, 269
<b>Pope, First Lieutenant (see Staff).....</b>	304
<b>Pope, Mrs. Douglas (Augusta Sibley).....</b>	427
Alice .....	427
Augusta .....	427
Elsie .....	427
<b>Potts, Dr. T. R.....</b>	86, 89, 427
Mrs. Dr. T. R. (Abbie Ann Steele).....	86, 89, 427
Mary Steele (Mrs. Crawford Livingston).....	427
Henry Sibley.....	427
John Charles.....	427
Abbie (Mrs. Charles McIntyre).....	427
Rev. George, D.D., New York.....	89
Rev. George E., Philadelphia .....	89
Major John C., New Orleans.....	89
<b>Prairie du Chien.....</b>	55
<b>Prairie on fire.....</b>	314
<b>Presbyterian church, the first in Minnesota.....</b>	72
<b>Pre-emption of unsurveyed lands.....</b>	163-172
<b>Princeton College, New Jersey —</b>	
Confers the degree of Doctor of Laws on General Sibley.....	375-377
<b>Provencalle, Louis.....</b>	69
<b>Purgatory and icicles.....</b>	21, 28
<b>Puritan names .....</b>	27
<b>Puritan worship, music, and pew system.....</b>	22
<b>Plymouth Rock, landing of Pilgrims at.....</b>	3
<b>Plymouth, New, founding of.....</b>	3
<b>Plymouth Company's grant to Endicott.....</b>	16
<b>Plymouth Company's charter surrendered to Winthrop and his company</b>	15
<b>Plympton, Major J.....</b>	56
<b>Poem, "Then and Now," by General Sibley.....</b>	402-404
<b>Poem, "Our Commander," by Captain Henry Castle.....</b>	374
<b>Political Parties —</b>	
None organized in Minnesota prior to November, 1849.....	138
Hon. H. H. Sibley advises against distraction of the young Terri- tory of Minnesota by formation of.....	134, 135
Struggle of, to gain power in newly organized territories, and to shape the organization itself.....	97
The three opposing, of 1849.....	139
(a) The Whig.....	139

	PAGE.
Political Parties— <i>Continued.</i>	
(b) The Democratic.....	139
(c) The Free Soil.....	139
The leaders of these.....	139
Hon. H. H. Sibley's relation to these.....	134, 135
Severe conflict of these in the house of representatives, in the elec- tion of a speaker.....	139, 140
Breaking up of.....	176
Attitude of Hon. H. H. Sibley toward party politics, 1852.....	201
The four opposing of 1860.....	242, 243
(a) That of the Northern Democracy.....	242
(b) That of the Southern Democracy.....	242
(c) That of the Constitutional Union.....	242
(d) That of the Republican.....	242
The leaders of these.....	242
Hon. H. H. Sibley's relation to these.....	243, 245
A "War Democrat," and supporter of Douglas.....	246

## Q.

### Quotations from, or Allusions to—

Alison, the historian.....	64, 65
Arnold, Dr. Thomas.....	113
Aristotle.....	361, 362
Berkeley, Bishop.....	31
Cæsar.....	255, 306, 332
Cicero.....	328, 362
De Maistre.....	113
Goldsmith.....	186
Horace.....	69, 363, 381, 406, 424, 426
Longfellow.....	88, 430
Milton.....	324
Pascal.....	114
Plato.....	407
Sallust.....	390
Sophocles.....	364
Shakespeare.....	187, 190, 411
Shirley.....	426
Tacitus.....	242
Terence.....	296
Wellesley.....	431
Whittier.....	409
Wordsworth.....	352, 410

## R.

Railroad companies and the early history of Minnesota.....	223
Minnesota & Pacific.....	223
Minneapolis & Cedar Valley.....	223
Transit.....	223

**Railroad Companies, etc.—Continued.**

Southern Minnesota.....	223
Minnesota & Northwestern.....	212-219

**Railroad —**

Projection by H. H. Sibley of a grand, from the Gulf of Mexico to the British line.....	201, 203, 204
And from St. Louis river, Lake Superior, to St. Paul.....	178, 205

**Ramsey, Governor —**

First governor of Minnesota Territory.....	122
Guest at Mr. Sibley's Mendota home.....	133
Proclaims the territory organized.....	133
Second governor of the state.....	254
Commissions H. H. Sibley colonel.....	254
Refuses to grant Colonel Sibley's application to be relieved of his commission and command.....	278
Urges the execution of the Indians .....	281
Proclamation of, against lawlessness and violence.....	286
Meets General Sibley returning from his second campaign.....	326
Urges General Sibley's promotion .....	336, 338
At the bi-centennial.....	368

Ravoux, Father.....	289
---------------------	-----

Redfield, Captain .....	290
-------------------------	-----

**Regiments, and Companies, engaged in the Sioux Expedition, 1862—****1863, under Colonel, then General, Sibley —**

First Minnesota Mounted Rangers, Colonel McPhail.

Third Minnesota Volunteers, Major Welch.

Sixth Minnesota Volunteers, Colonel Crooks.

Seventh Minnesota Volunteers, Colonel Marshall.

Eighth Minnesota Volunteers, Colonel Miller.

Ninth Minnesota Volunteers, Captain Chase.

Tenth Minnesota Volunteers, Colonel Baker.

Cullen Guard, Colonel McPhail.

Renville Rangers, Lieutenant Gorman.

Artillery, Captain Jones.

Scouts, under Major Brown, McLeod, and Dooley.

Volunteer companies re-enlisted.....257, 258, 304, 305, 317

Renville Rangers.....	252, 253, 271, 274
-----------------------	--------------------

**Republican Party of Minnesota —**

Organized in 1854 .....	223
-------------------------	-----

Attitude toward the state railroad bonds.....	360
---	-----

Republican legislature, extra session of, in 1860, as to the state railroad bonds.....	358
---	-----

Revolutionary record of the Sibleys .....	32
---	----

**Rice, Senator Henry M.—**

One of the pre-territorial settlers of Minnesota.....	69, 120
---	---------

Statement of, as to the relation of the Indians of the West to the Civil War.....	282
--	-----

Statement of, as to the number of Indians to be executed .....	292
--	-----

At the bi-centennial.....	368
---------------------------	-----

	PAGE
Riggs, Rev. S. R.—	
Early missionary in Minnesota.....	64
Distribution of the Dakotas by.....	65
Chaplain on staff of General Sibley.....	279, 304
On the military commission to try the Indians.....	279
Condemns the white man's conduct toward the Indians.....	284
Tribute to General Sibley.....	320
Rockwell, Hon. M., of Massachusetts, resists the establishment of the Territory of Minnesota .....	125, 126
Rocque, Old Indian Trader—	
Humorous story about.....	223
Rolette, Joseph, Sr.—	
Firm of Dousman, Rolette & Sibley .....	53
Root, Hon. Mr. of Ohio —	
Resists and ridicules the establishment of the Territory of Minne- sota.....	106, 107, 123
Persistent obstructor of Hon. H. H. Sibley .....	143-145
<b>S.</b>	
Salem, Massachusetts—	
Second town planted in New England.....	3
Called "Mahumbcak" by the Indians .....	3
Called "Mahumkeik" by the Pilgrims.....	3
Called from Psalm 76:2.....	3
The residence of the first American Sibleys.....	17
First Protestant church of the New World in .....	19
John Sibley of Salem, a member of the first Protestant church in the New World.....	19
Rev. Francis Higginson arrives in .....	16, 19
Mrs. Sarah Sibley "raises the Devil in Salem, by advising Indian John how to make cake" .....	29
Witchcraft in .....	29, 30
Sandbank grave of the executed Indians.....	291
Scalping of Indians.....	295, 296, 311
Atrocity of.....	333
Schenck, Hon. Mr., of Ohio, resists the establishment of the Territory of Minnesota.....	127
School lands of Minnesota.....	121
Two sections in each township, a double quantity, or one-eighteenth of the whole domain of Minnesota, secured by H. H. Sibley for school purposes .....	121, 122
Memorial to Congress to place the, at the disposition of the legis- lature.....	145
Schoolcraft, Henry R.....	90
Discoverer of the source of the Mississippi.....	91
Legend of Hiawatha by.....	430
Secession, its relation to the Indian outbreak in Minnesota.....	281, 282
Seymour, Hon. Mr., of New York, stands by Mr. Sibley in a critical mo- ment .....	193

	PAGE.
Sheehan, Captain .....	260
Sherman, Hon. John, of Ohio—	
Attack on Hon. H. H. Sibley .....	228
Attack of, resented by Governor Sibley .....	228
Sherman, General William Tecumseh. ....	368
 Sibleys—	
Various forms of the name.....	4, 11, 12
Derivation of the name of the.....	4, 5
The English.....	6-14
The St. Albans.....	6-8
The, of Kent.....	7
The, of Kent and Hertfordshire.....	8
Antiquity of the.....	11
Hyde Clarke's account of the.....	9, 11
Distinguished English connections of the.....	11
Coats of arms of the.....	5-10
Fairbairn's crests of the.....	6
Burke's arms of the.....	6, 7
Dugdale's arms of the.....	6
Hasted's explanation of the arms of the.....	7
Connection of the Kent and Hertfordshire.....	8
The first American.....	2, 4, 20
The Winthrop Fleet and the.....	14, 17
The Endicott Fleet and the.....	16
The Charlestown and Salem.....	8, 19
The space between the English and American.....	9, 21
The line of the, backward from the Winthrop Fleet to William the Conqueror.....	11-13
The line of the, forward from the Winthrop Fleet till now.....	13-46
Counties in England where the, are found.....	14
The Salem.....	8, 19, 20
The Sutton .....	8, 19, 20, 25, 23
The, a religious, Godfearing people.....	21
Curious stories about the.....	21-24
Intermarriages of the.....	25
Ranks, occupations, and professions of the.....	25
Distinguished American connections of the.....	26
Prominence and numbers of the.....	24-27
Colonial record of the.....	32
Revolutionary record of the.....	32
 Sibley—	
John, mayor of St. Albans.....	6, 8
John, barrister of Gray's Inn... ..	6
John, prebendary of Lincoln.....	11
John, clerk of the star chamber.....	13
Henry, high sheriff of Hertford.....	6
Thomas, high sheriff of Hertford.....	6

	PAGE
<i>Sibley — Continued.</i>	
Thomas, Esq., of Yardley .....	7, 8
Nicholas, Esq., of Yardley.....	7, 8
Edward, of monastery of St. Albans.....	8
Richard, of Cogenhoe.....	11
Thomas, clerk.....	14
Thomas, of Leicester.....	14
William, of Leicester.....	14
John I., of Charlestown.....	3, 18
John I., of Salem.....	2, 3
John I., of Salem, descendants of.....	2, 3, 20
John I., of Salem, traditions about .....	2, 3
Richard, of Salem.....	2, 3
Samuel, deacon, of Sutton.....	24
Joseph I., of Sutton.....	3
Joseph II., of Sutton.....	3
Jonathan III., of Sutton.....	3
Reuben, of Sutton .....	3
Solomon, of Sutton .....	3
Joseph, Lieutenant, of Sutton.....	24
Joseph, Captain, of Sutton.....	24
John, park keeper, of Sutton.....	25
Nathaniel, Captain, of Sutton.....	25
Timothy, Colonel, of Sutton .....	25
Jonas, Hon., of Sutton.....	26
Jonas L., Esq., of Sutton.....	26
Mark Hopkins, Hon., of Sutton.....	26
John, Dr., of Natchitoches.....	26
Oscar E., of New York.....	26
Hiram, Esq., of Rochester.....	26
George E., Esq., of New York.....	26
Caleb, Brevet Major General, United States Army.....	26
Septimus, Dr., of London, England.....	26
George, General, of London (Indian decoration).....	10
Henry Hopkins, Hon., of St. Louis.....	26
Henry Hopkins, Major General, Confederate Army .....	26
Josiah, of Augusta.....	27
Richard, of Stamford.....	27
Solomon, of Detroit, father of Henry Hastings.....	32
Children of Solomon .....	35
Ebenezer Sproat, Colonel, United States Army .....	35
Alexander Hamilton .....	35
Frederic B .....	35
Henry Hastings.....	35
John Langdon, Rev., librarian of Yale.....	18, 26
Mrs. Richard, of Cogenhoe.....	11
Mrs. John (Rachel), of Salem.....	17
Mrs. John (Sarah), of Charlestown.....	18

	PAGE.
<b>Sibley — Continued.</b>	
Mrs. Mary Wessels, of New York.....	26
Mrs. May Peet, of Stamford.....	26
Mrs. Jonathan (Sarah Dow, tall bride), of Sutton.....	28
Mrs. Samuel ("Sister Mary"), of Salem.....	29
Mrs. Solomon (Sarah Whipple Sproat, mother of Henry Hastings).. 35, 36, 41	35, 36, 41
Phoebe.....	35
Catherine W.....	35
Catherine Whipple.....	35
Mary S.....	35
Augusta Ann. ....	35
Sarah Alexandrine.....	35
Mrs. Sarah Jane (wife of Henry Hastings).....	88
Hannah.....	25
Susanna .....	25
Huldah.....	25, 26
Mary.....	25
Mary Ann.....	25
Elizabeth .....	26
Catherine Whipple.....	26
Sarah.....	26
<b>Sibley, Henry Hastings —</b>	
Ancestral line of.....	2
Immediate ancestor of .....	2, 21, 32
Birth of.....	43
British prisoner when a babe.....	44
Early boyhood of, and education.....	47
Leaves home for Sault Ste. Marie.....	47, 48
Clerk in a sutler's store.....	48
Agent for a widow.....	48
Clerk in the American Fur Company for five years.....	48, 52
Goes to Mackinac.....	48
Hardships by the way.....	48
Trip to Chicago and return, in 1829.....	49
Unites with the Presbyterian Church.....	62
Trip to Detroit, and return, in 1832.....	49, 50
Gay entering into the city.....	84
Supply purchasing agent .....	52
Becomes a partner in the new fur company (viz., Dousman, Rolette, and Sibley).....	53, 54
Leaves Mackinac, and comes to Prairie du Chien; thence to Men- dota, in 1834.....	54
Emotions when reaching Mendota.....	55
The splendid gander-shot.....	52
The Indian and the ducks.....	58, 59
Purchases Alexis Bailly's interest.....	59, 60



	PAGE
<b>Sibley, Henry Hastings — Continued.</b>	
Builds stone warehouse and residence.....	60
His tour of inspection.....	60
The offered squaw.....	60, 61
His literary activity.....	62
His religious views .....	62, 63
Helps form the first Presbyterian church .....	63
Vindication of early traders by.....	70-72
Vindication of early pioneers by.....	72
Hunting expedition of 1840.....	73
Hunting expedition of 1841.....	74
Rides ten miles bareheaded in winter time .....	76
His Indian costume and appearance at this time .....	78
Named "Hal a Dakotah" and "Wahzeomanzee" or "Walker-in-the-Pines".....	79
Pursuit of elk.....	80
Encounter with a buffalo.....	80, 81
Protects an Indian camp.....	82
Relieves the dying Wahpetons .....	83
Only civil magistrate in a region large as the Empire of France....	84
Mode of administering justice .....	84, 85
Marries Sarah Jane Steele .....	85
Family of.....	89
Mendota home of.....	90
Distinguished guests of.....	91
Church edifice erected by.....	90
Hospitality of the home at Mendota .....	90
<b>Thirtieth Congress, second session; entrance on his congressional career.....</b>	
Delegate from the residuum of Wisconsin Territory.....	94, 103
Territorial extent of the United States at this time.....	104, 105
The great questions agitating the United States at this time.....	97
Was, successively, a citizen of four different territories, without once changing his residence .....	97-103
Curiosity at his first appearance in Congress.....	119
Struggle for his seat.....	106
His maiden speech.....	104, 112
Compliment of Chief Justice Goodrich.....	109-111
Importance of the struggle.....	107, 108
Efforts in organizing the Territory of Minnesota.....	113, 114
Secures two sections of land for school purposes, in every township	120-130
Secures the name of Minnesota .....	123
Locates capitol at St. Paul.....	121
Resists the Wilmot proviso.....	122
Successful strategy of, to secure the passage of the bill organizing the Territory of Minnesota.....	123
Addresses a circular to the members of the house.....	129, 130
His further labors.....	126
	131-135

**Sibley, Henry Hastings—Continued.**

His first address to his constituents.....	135
Thirty-first Congress, first session.....	137
Address to the people of Minnesota.....	137
Efforts against the whisky traffic.....	138
Foreman of the first grand jury west of the Mississippi.....	139
Complexion of Congress in 1849-1850.....	139
A Democrat, but not a partisan.....	137, 178
Labors of, in Congress.....	141, 142
Bills introduced by.....	143
Appropriations obtained.....	145, 146
Resists the admission of the Utah and New Mexico delegates....	146-148
Asserts the rights of delegates.....	149-154
Arraigns, in a great speech, the Indian policy of the government..	151-156
Predicts the Sioux massacre of 1862.....	155
Defends the Indian's right, and replies to Mr. Mason.....	157
The Thirty-first Congress, second session.....	158
Bills introduced by.....	158-160
Contents for the reduction of the Fort Snelling reservation.....	161-163
Contents for the right to lease the school lands .....	163
Contents for the right of pre-emption of unsurveyed lands.....	165-167
Replies to M. Bowlin.....	167
The "Higher Law," of Minnesota.....	168
Replies to Stevens and Wentworth .....	168-170
Defends the principle of natural right.....	170, 171
Asserts the doctrine of Douglas.....	172
Demands reorganization of the Indian department.....	173
Thirty-Second Congress, first session.....	175
Character of the times.....	175
Complexion of Congress.....	176
Had no vote in the compromise measures.....	177
A Jeffersonian Democrat.....	178
Bills, resolutions, and petitions introduced by.....	178-180
Appropriations secured by.....	181
An effective speaker.....	182
Insists on the fidelity of territorial officers.....	183
Assails the policy of the government and pleads, victoriously, for the homestead bill.....	184-187
Defeats the scheme in Bissell's bill for the indigent insane.....	188-191
Saves five roads to Minnesota .....	191-196
The sharp and final struggle.....	195
His grand appeal for aid in behalf of the starving Indians.....	196-200
Thirty-second Congress, second session.....	200
Complexion of Congress.....	200
His course at such a critical time.....	201
Bills introduced by .....	201, 202
Appropriations secured by.....	202
His project of a grand national railroad from the Gulf to British line.....	203-205

**Sibley, Henry Hastings—Continued.**

His last appeal for a railroad from Lake Superior to St. Paul.....	205-207
His last act in Congress.....	207
Obligations of Minnesota to.....	208
Remarks on the congressional career of.....	207-209
Post-congressional career of.....	211
Election of, to the territorial legislature, October, 1853.....	211
Fights the charter of the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad Com- pany.....	212, 213
Secures a proviso in the Minnesota land bill.....	213
Fights the corruption of the legislature of 1855.....	216, 217
Exposes the corruption in a memorial to Congress.....	218, 219
Asserts the power of Congress to disapprove and disaffirm territo- rial legislation.....	222
Exposes the corruption of the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad Company.....	218
Asserts the right of Congress to annul a fraudulent charter .....	219
Elected president of the Democratic branch of the convention to form the State Constitution.....	224
Elected, 1857, first governor of the State of Minnesota.....	222
Chastises Hon. John Sherman of Ohio.....	228
Financial panic of 1857.....	229
Opposes the "Five Million Loan" to railroad companies .....	230
Votes against amending the Constitution to favor the loan .....	231
Construes the amendment in favor of the state .....	233
Requires a "priority of lien" on the property of the railroad com- panies before issuing the state bonds.....	233
Yields to the mandamus of the supreme court and issues the bonds	234
Hindered, by Republican press, from negotiating the bonds.....	236
Ceases to issue the bonds.....	236
Requires foreclosure, and delivery of property to the state, by the defaulting companies.....	236
Denounces threatened repudiation.....	236, 237
His relation to the bonds.....	237-239
Error of the supreme court .....	238
Vindicates the law against mob violence .....	239
<b>Recommends —</b>	
The organization of the militia.....	239
The amendment of the laws.....	239
The arrest of lawless Indians.....	239
The pursuit of fugitives from justice.....	239
The encouragement of immigration.....	239
The reduction of election districts.....	239
The necessity of normal schools.....	239
The opening of the university .....	240
The promotion of agriculture and commerce.....	240
Close of the administration of, January 1, 1860.....	240
His political relations in the year 1860; — a Douglas Democrat .....	243

	PAGE.
<b>Sibley, Henry Hastings — Continued.</b>	
A delegate to the convention at Charleston, South Carolina, 1860....	244
Elected a member of the National Committee.....	245
Votes steadily for Douglas.....	245
<b>First Military Campaign — Commencement of his military career.....</b>	<b>248</b>
Commissioned, August 19, 1862, as colonel commanding the expedition against the Sioux Indians, in 1862.....	254
His view of the situation.....	255, 256
His view that of General Malmros.....	256
His burdens and responsibilities.....	257
His view of the objects of the expedition.....	257
Orders, August 25th, the advance of Colonel McPhail.....	258
Starts in force, after Little Crow, August 25, 1862.....	257, 258
Reaches Fort Ridgley, August 28, 1862.....	258
Orders, August 31st, the advance of Major Brown and burial party	259
Orders, September 2d, McPhail to advance, for the relief of Major Brown.....	259
Marches, in force, at midnight, September 2d, against Little Crow.	260
Fights the battle of Birch Coolie, September 3, 1862.....	260, 261
Opens correspondence with Little Crow.....	262
His continuance of the correspondence.....	263
Assailed by the public press.....	265
His private letters to his wife.....	266, 267
In view of complaints and calumnies, and anxious to be relieved, places, three times, his commission as colonel commanding the Indian expedition, at the disposal of Governor Ramsey..	266, 267, 278
The staff and field officers of, protest against the purpose of Colonel Sibley, and forward their protest to Major General Pope.....	278
Is vindicated by official dispatches of Malmros and Pope.....	268, 269
Is vindicated by the nature of the situation.....	270
Is vindicated by the results of his policy.....	270, 271
Fights the decisive battle of Wood Lake, September 23, 1862. .	271, 272
Lacks a cavalry force, to pursue.....	272
Letter of, to his wife.....	273
Crosses the Yellow Medicine river and bivouacs on the prairie, near Camp Release.....	272
Invades the Sioux camp, and releases the captives.....	274
His thrilling description of the release.....	275, 276
The application of, to be relieved, is refused by Governor Ramsey. Major General Pope and Major General Halleck insisting on the retention and promotion of.....	278
Is created brigadier general.....	278
Organizes a military commission to try the Indian criminals.....	279
Goes into winter quarters.....	280
Conducts, in person, under guard, four hundred manacled Sioux, to Camp Lincoln.....	280
Dispatches Colonel Marshall with eighteen hundred Indian prisoners to Fort Snelling.....	281

	PAGE
<b>Sibley, Henry Hastings — Continued.</b>	
Guards the condemned Indians.....	286
Orders the execution of the condemned Indians.....	288
Reports the execution to President Lincoln.....	289
Is officially notified of his appointment as brigadier general.....	297
Desires to withdraw from military life, but yields to the voice of the people of Minnesota, and remains in the service.....	299, 300
Is renominated as brigadier general.....	300, 301
Second military campaign of.....	302, 303
Leaves St. Paul, June 6, 1863.....	303
Reaches Camp Pope, June 7th.....	303
His effective force, and staff.....	304
Breaks camp, and marches out, June 16, 1863.....	304
Justification of the large force of.....	304
Is the subject of groundless detraction.....	306
Description of the march of.....	306
Reaches, July 4th, the Cheyenne river .....	306
Opens communication with Chippewa half-breeds, near Devil's lake.....	307
Reaches Camp Atchison, July 20, 1863.....	307
Makes forced marches in pursuit of the retreating Sioux.....	307
Fights the battle of Big Mound, July 24, 1863.....	308
Immediate pursuit prevented, by misunderstanding of an order of.	309
Fights the battle of Dead Buffalo Lake, July 26, 1863.....	310, 311
Fights the battle of Stony Lake, July 28, 1863 .....	311-313
Dismisses a captured Teton with words of kindness.....	313
Continues his forced marching .....	313
Reaches the Missouri river, July 29, 1863; having driven 10,000 Indians across the river; General Sully not intercepting.....	314, 316
Issues, at Camp Braden, July 31st, the order for the return of the expedition.....	317, 318
Importance of the victories of, to the state and nation.....	318, 319
Testimony as to the generalship and military success of.....	320, 321
Sunday observance by, during his campaigns.....	322
Prohibition of liquor by.....	322
Personal bereavement of, during the second campaign.....	322-325
Vivid dream of, in his tent.....	324
Reaches St. Paul, September 8, 1863.....	326
Moral effect of the campaigns of, upon the Indians.....	327
Observations upon the problem sought to be solved by the cam- paigns of.....	327-332
Post-military career of .....	335
Charles Sumner's action in the United States Senate, in relation to confirmation of the rank of.....	336
Formal commission of, as brigadier general.....	336
Transmission of commission to .....	337
Acknowledgment of commission to .....	337
Elected director in Minnesota Valley Railroad Company.....	337

	Page.
<b>Sibley, Henry Hastings — Continued.</b>	
Is appointed major general United States Volunteers .....	338
Acknowledges the honor.....	338
United States Senate confirms the brevet of.....	339
Formal commission of brevet transmitted .....	339
Acceptance of the commission of .....	340
Is honorably mustered out of service, and the order is revoked for important reasons.....	340
Is commissioned to negotiate treaties with the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians.....	341-343
Is commissioned again.....	343
Elected president of the St. Paul Gas Light Company.....	343
Elected president of the Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Com- pany .....	343
Elected president of the St. Paul City Bank.....	343
Elected president of the Chamber of Commerce.....	343
Re-elected president of the Chamber of Commerce.....	343
Resignation of the presidency of the Chamber of Commerce by.....	343
Governor Marshall upon the resignation of .....	344
Resolutions upon the resignation of.....	344
Appointed president of the board of regents of the State University	345
Resists repudiation of the state railroad bonds in 1870.....	349
Fulminates against repudiation.....	351
Thunders against repudiation.....	352
Appeals to the pulpit against repudiation .....	352, 353
Cries from the market place against repudiation.....	354
Is elected to the legislature, October, 1869, to denounce repudia- tion.....	354
Denounces repudiation in the house of representatives, February 8, 1871.....	354, 355
Seventeen presidents, New York banks, address congratulations and thanks to, for denouncing repudiation.....	355
Prominent business firms salute, for his denunciation .....	355
Imperishable example of.....	364
Retirement of, in 1871, from political life .....	364
The first citizen of Minnesota.....	365
Appointed chairman of commissioners to select a city park.....	365
Elected director First National Bank.....	365
Appointed president State Normal School Board.....	365
Appointed by President U. S. Grant as one of several commission- ers to supervise the whole Indian department .....	365
Appointed by Governor Davis as chairman of Relief Committee dur- ing the locust plague.....	366
Elected fellow of American Geographical Society.....	366
Nominated for Congress, 1878.....	366
His resignation of the presidency of the board of regents State University not accepted.....	366, 367
Elected president Oakland Cemetery Association.....	367

**Sibley, Henry Hastings—Continued.**

Presides at thirtieth anniversary Minnesota State Historical Society .....	367
Elected chairman Democratic State Convention, 1883 .....	367
Presides at the bi-centennial of the discovery of the Falls of St. Anthony by Hennepin.....	368
Presides at inaugural banquet of Governor Hubbard.....	368
Is honored by a semi-centennial banquet commemorating his advent to Minnesota.....	368
Resumé of the life and deeds of.....	382, 383
Intellectual character of.....	384
Character of, as a statesman.....	384, 385
Character of, as an orator.....	386-389
Character of, as a debater.....	389, 390
Moral attributes of.....	390-392
Religious element in.....	392-395
Literary merit of.....	395-397
Power of description.....	397-399
A model in epistolary correspondence.....	399-401
Poetical propensity of.....	401-404
Tributes by, to the deceased.....	404-406
Love of the romantic and beautiful, in .....	407-410
Love of the humorous, in.....	411, 412
Large-hearted benevolence of.....	412-417
Closing words by the author, in reference to.....	428-431
Sioux, the Indians and warriors, their numbers and strength.....	65-67, 304, 307-309, 312, 313, note, 316
“Sioux Crossing,” the, sometimes called “Sibley Crossing”..	314, note, 425
Sioux, the, removed from Minnesota to Crow Creek Reservation.....	292
Sissitonwans (Village of the Marsh).....	66
“Sister Mary” and “Indian John”.....	29
Sitting Bull, Sioux Indian chief, submits, in despair and contempt, to the treaty of 1889.....	329
“Skeddadle,” a classic word.....	272, note
Slavery, African, and the territories.....	96-99
Mr. Sibley’s attitude toward.....	117, 118, 123, 124, 243
Slaymaker, George Duffield.....	427
Mrs. G. D. (Clara Steele).....	427
Catherine.....	427
Snelling, Fort —	
First sight of by H. H. Sibley.....	55
Its importance to all.....	56
Mrs. General Steele (widow) and Miss Sarah Jane, come to.....	86
H. H. Sibley assiduous in his attentions at the.....	86
Starving Wahpetons saved by kindness from the.....	83
Rev. Ezekiel Gear, chaplain at the.....	86
Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Steele come to the.....	85
First Presbyterian church formed at the.....	63
Other mention of.....	131, 254, 381



	PAGE.
Spencer, clerk of commissary.....	304
"Split-stake" set up at Birch Coolie.....	262
Sproat, Colonel Ebenezer —	
Marries Catherine Whipple.....	35
Sarah Whipple, wife of Judge Solomon, and mother of Henry	
Hastings Sibley.....	341
Maternal grandfather of Henry Hastings Sibley.....	38
Record of, during the Revolution.....	39
Relation to ordinance of 1787.....	39, 40
Builder of a second "Mayflower".....	40
Arrives at mouth of Muskingum river, Ohio.....	40
His majestic stature.....	40, 41
His sobriquet, "Buckeye".....	40
Portrait painted by Kosciusko.....	43
Squatter Sovereignty —	
Relation of, to pre-emption of unsurveyed lands.....	168, 169, 172, 179
Relation of, to the "Higher Law".....	168, 169
Squaw, the young.....	60, 61
Staff, the military, of General Sibley.....	304
Stanton, Hon. E., war secretary.....	338
Tribute to General Sibley .....	321
State, The —	
Is a divine institute.....	361
An atheistic impossible.....	361
Aristotle, in reference to.....	361
Is a public person.....	362
Must have a conscience.....	362
Cicero, quoted, as to the law of.....	362
Primary ground of.....	362
Final cause, or design of.....	363
Ten Commandments a part of the law of .....	363
Laws of, apart from morality, are vain.....	363
Horace, quoted, as to laws of.....	363
Brutal ethics of.....	296, 322, 362, 363
Stephens, Hon. Mr., of Georgia —	
Assails the rights of delegates.....	148
Is replied to by Mr. Sibley .....	149
Stevens, Hon. Mr., of Pennsylvania —	
Assails Mr. Sibley's argument in behalf of the pioneer .....	168
Replied to by Mr. Sibley.....	168
Encounter with Mr. Sibley, as to the "Higher Law" .....	168, 169
Steele —	
General James, father of Mrs. H. H. Sibley.....	86-88
Mrs. General James Steele.....	87
Elizabeth.....	87
William H.....	87
James.....	87
John, Dr.....	87

	Page.
<b>Steele — Continued.</b>	
Mary H.....	87
Franklin, Hon .....	68, 87
Rachel E.....	87
Abbie Ann.....	87
Sarah Jane.....	87
Captain William, the.....	87
Grandfather of Mrs. H. H. Sibley.....	87
Mrs. Captain William.....	87
Archibald, Colonel.....	87
William, General.....	87
John, General.....	87
James, General.....	87
Rachel.....	87
Ann.....	87
Mr. Charles.....	427
Mrs. Charles (Fanny Dawson).....	427
Charles .....	427
Stony Lake, battle of.....	311, 312
Circling of the Indians at the.....	312
St. Peter, scene in at time of the massacre.....	257
St. Paul, home of H. H. Sibley in.....	420-424
Stuart, Robert, of Mackinac —	
Character of.....	49
Agent of fur company.....	49
H. H. Sibley reports to.....	49
Elder, First Presbyterian Church, Detroit.....	49
H. H. Sibley received into the family of.....	49
Dispatches H. H. Sibley to transact official business with Governor Porter, at Detroit.....	50
Sully, Major General Alfred —	
Co-operating against the Sioux Indians.....	303
Moves from Sioux City.....	303
Hindered from preventing the crossing of the Missouri by the Sioux.....	314, 315
Subsequently inflicts severe loss upon the Indians.....	326, 327
Sumner, Hon. Charles, Massachusetts —	
Parallel between the advocacy by, for the black man, and the ad- vocacy, by Sibley, for the red man.....	150
Magnanimous conduct of, toward General Sibley.....	335, 336
Sunday —	
Kept by Mr. Sibley.....	322, 323
Thursday kept for.....	78
Sutton, Massachusetts —	
Origin and township of .....	21
Original proprietors of .....	21
Deed of the township of.....	21
Periods of.....	21

	PAGE.
<b>Sutton, Massachusetts — Continued.</b>	
Purgatory, cavern of.....	21
The meeting house in.....	22
Tea-drinking in.....	22
New church building in.....	22
Pew system in.....	23
The Sibleys in.....	23-25
The church music in.....	23
Intermarriages of the Sibleys of.....	25, 26
Various rank of the Sibleys of.....	25
Puritanic names of the Sibleys of.....	27
Classic names of the Sibleys of.....	28
Curious stories about the Sibleys of.....	28, 29

## T.

Tache, Archbishop.....	368
Taliaferro, Major L.....	56, 57
Ta-sau-ga, Indian chief.....	65
Ta-wai-o-ta-doo-ta, Indian chief.....	65
“Le Petit Corbeau,” “the Little Crow.” ( <i>See Little Crow.</i> )	
Taylor, President Zachary.....	133
Taylor, Captain.....	311
Tea-drinking in Sutton, Massachusetts.....	22
Tee-ye-to, the Soldier's Lodge.....	252
Teton, the young Apollo-like. His exploit in evading his pursuers.....	313
Territories of the United States; history of their acquisition and admission, up to the date of the organization of the Territory of Minnesota.....	116-135
Telegrams to General Sibley.....	342
Thanks of General Sibley to his officers and soldiers.....	317
Theodosian Code, the; the Ten Commandments, and Sermon on the Mount, a part of.....	364
Thomas, Right Rev. E. S., Bishop of Kansas, letter of, to General Sibley.....	380
Thompson, Hon. Mr., of Indiana —	
Chairman of Committee on Elections.....	112
Reports in favor of admitting Mr. Sibley to a seat in Congress, as delegate from Wisconsin.....	112
Thermometer, range of during the expeditions against the Sioux.....	304, 305, 316
Titonwans (Village of the Prairies).....	66
Traders, Indian; character of the early.....	68, 69, 72
Treaties with the Indians.....	56, 100, 292, 328, 329, note, 341, 343, 351
Trefan, F.....	372
Tribunal of the Indian chase; Mr. Sibley's experience of its jurisdiction.....	75, 76, 77

## U.

	PAGE
Ulm, New —	
Defense of, by Hon. Charles E. Flandrau.....	253
Battle of .....	254
Retreat from, to Mankato.....	254, 255
Assault at, upon the Indian prisoners of war.....	280
Note upon New Ulm.....	See end of Appendix
Character of some of the early settlers of .....	See end of Appendix
United States of America —	
Only two of all the, have their boundaries running east and west across the Mississippi.....	118
Influence of the, upon Europe.....	94-96
Wonderful expansion of, in 1848, 1849.....	96, 97
Great questions agitating the, when Mr. Sibley began his congress- sional career ( <i>See E Pluribus Unum</i> ).....	97, 105
Condition of, at the time of Sioux massacre.....	252
University of Minnesota —	
Two townships of land for the .....	170
Governor Sibley recommends that the, be put in operation.....	240
General Sibley, president of the regents of the.....	345
Ovation (1889) at the, to General Sibley.....	379, 380
Resolution by the regents of the, in recognition of the honor con- ferred by Princeton College upon General Sibley.....	378

## V.

Venable, Hon. Mr., of Virginia, supports Mr. Sibley in defense of the Indians.....	199
Veto of the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad charter, by Governor Gorman.....	217
Virginia, the Old Dominion.....	117
Boundaries of.....	117
Origin of, by royal charters.....	117
Extent of the original jurisdiction.....	117
Cedes the Northwest Territory to the United States, forever.....	117
Stipulates its freedom from slavery.....	117
Virgin feast, the.....	67
Virtues, the Indian.....	67
Vote of the State of Minnesota, for adoption of its constitution.....	231
For amendment of, April 15, 1858.....	231
For repudiation.....	347

## W.

Wacoota, Indian chief.....	65
Wah-mun-di-doo-ta, Indian chief.....	65
Wapashaw, Indian chief.....	65
Wahpekutas (Leaf Shooters).....	65
Wahpetonwans (Village in the Leaves).....	66

	PAGE.
Wa-ze-o-man-zee (Walker-in-the-Pines), the Indian name of General Sibley.....	79, 283
War, Our Civil—	
Date of commencement of.....	246
Causes of.....	97, 98, 175, 176, 241, 243, 245, 246
The Sioux.....	248-333
Date of commencement of.....	248
Causes of.....	251
Loyalty of H. H. Sibley during.....	246
Washburns, the, at the bi-centennial.....	368
Weiser, Surgeon, treacherously shot.....	308
Weed, W.....	372
Welch, Major A. E., Third regiment.....	261, 271
Whipple, Commodore A.....	2, 35, 36
Catherine.....	35
Marries Sarah Hopkins, sister of Stephen Hopkins.....	35
Maternal great-grandfather of Henry Hastings Sibley.....	35
Fires the first gun on the ocean against the British.....	37
First to unfurl the American flag in the Thames.....	37
His achievements as a naval commander.....	36, 37
His laconic reply to Sir James Wallace, admiral of his Majesty's fleet.....	37
Epitaph on the tombstone of.....	38
Whipple, Captain, artillery.....	309, 311
Whipple, Bishop—	
Letter of, to General Sibley.....	294
Preaches in camp.....	323
Meets Sibley's returning expedition.....	326
Whitney, Captain, Sixth regiment, arrests the Indians at Yellow Medicine .....	279
At the execution at Mankato.....	291
Williamson, Rev. T. S.....	63, 289
Wilmot proviso resisted.....	123, 124
Wilson, Hon. James A., of New Hampshire, presents to the house the official certificate of H. H. Sibley, delegate from the residuum of Wisconsin .....	104, 105
Wilson, Hon. Eugene M., of Hennepin—	
Words of, in the Democratic State Convention of 1881.....	360
Wilson, Captain Eugene M.....	272, 311
Winthrop, John.....	16
Winthrop Fleet, 1629-1630.....	2, 3, 11, 14
Result of a great movement.....	15
Contained the germ of American independence.....	15
John Sibley of Salem came over in.....	15
Ministers in.....	16
Character of.....	15
Eminent men in.....	15
Number of immigrants in.....	16
Lands at Salem, Massachusetts.....	17

	Page
Winthrop, Hon. Robert C .....	125-128, 134, 140
Winnebagoes.....	256, 259, 263, 292
Wright county war.....	239
Wisconsin Territory.....	104-106, 109, 110
The residuum of, the occasion of H. H. Sibley's appearance in Congress.....	119
Organic rights of the residuum of, asserted by H. H. Sibley.....	109-111, 119
Extent of the residuum of.....	120
Population of the residuum.....	120
H. H. Sibley, delegate from the residuum of.....	104, 105
Wisconsin admitted as a state, a residuum of her territory not in- cluded.....	120
Witchcraft—	
In Europe.....	29
In New England.....	31
In Salem, Massachusetts.....	29
Recognized in the Bible.....	30
Executions for.....	30
Wood Lake, battle of.....	271, 272
Great importance of the.....	273, 281, 282

## Y.

Yanktonnais. (See Ihanktowana and Ihanktowans).....	66
Yellow Medicine Agency.....	251
Yellow Medicine river.....	297
Young, Mr. Elbert A.....	427
Mrs. E. A. (Sarah A. Sibley).....	427
Henry Sibley.....	427
Cornelia.....	427
Elbert A.....	427

## ERRATA.

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For Beever, read Beaver.

Page 41, line 25th, for "Menica" read Monica.

Page 368, line 11th, after "Cadwallader," read Washburn.

Page 384, line 39th, for "realtion" read relation.

Page 426, line 4th, for "Medicine Bottom" read "Medicine Bottle."



ER - 2

DW









